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THE RED HARVEST

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THE RED HARVEST

A CRY FOR PEACE

ASSEMBLED AND EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

VINCENT GODFREY BURNS

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1930

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TO MY GOOD FRIEND AND WISE TEACHER

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

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They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.

JESUS CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

One day I looked out over the countryside from the height at Verdun. As far as eye could see, devastation! Only a few stumps along the river Meuse where was once a forest. Only a sea of mud where once were green fields and fertile farms. Only a few white heaps of powder where once were villages. Barbed wire with barbs as big as penknives, and trenches with lips as scarlet as the poppies that bloomed once in pleasant, peaceful door-yards. And there I made a vow. Another day at Château Thierry they showed me a splotch on a white wall, where they said a little child had been killed. And there I made a vow. Another time I stood in what used to be the city of Soissons, saw the one wall of the cathedral left standing, and looked out across the fields over which the fury of battle had passed but a few days before, where the blood had not yet dried on the sod, where the holocaust had left behind its shattered chaos. And there I made a vow. I marched with my fellow soldiers many a time behind a funeral drum that told of another comrade to be laid below the ground. And I renewed my vow. One day we stood to honor a young soldier with our regiments drawn up in a great hollow square while the generals pinned upon his breast the reward of war, the cross, symbol of salvation. And then a few hours later I learned the truth; the hero of the day had been badly gassed and the doctors gave him just one month to live. And so again I made my vow. At Montfaucon they told us how our own barrage had fallen short and killed hundreds of our buddies with our own shells. And once more I made a vow. On the Red Cross hospital ship, *Mercy*, I saw more of what war had done to men: men with eyes gone, limbs gone, minds gone. And there my vow renewed itself. And then at last I saw my brother come home, after fourteen months in the trenches, a shell-shocked, shattered husk of the brave and gay young soldier who had enlisted and marched away. And so my vow was sealed.

And that vow was not to kill Germans. For we who were in the thick of the thing called war knew them as our brothers and not as our foes. My vow was to kill this ugly thing called war which had transformed the world into a theater of horrors. I

gave my solemn pledge to God, over and over again, that I would do what little I could to end the war-system. I felt it a solemn obligation, a supreme duty to the boys who died and could no longer speak, to give my life-long influence to stem this tide of hate and anger which plunges whole peoples into murder, destruction and wholesale barbarism.

I feel that this volume is the keeping, in part, of that vow. Poetry is recognized everywhere as an authentic vehicle for the expression and dissemination of idealism. Indeed it is through poetry preëminently that man's soul is moved to attempt his noblest steps of progress. There is no need of apology, therefore, in behalf of the noble line of poets here represented, poets of to-day and yesterday, who voice the cry for peace. They are the vanguard of another noble company of to-morrow who will make the dream come true.

There are many glaring anomalies in our modern world but none, perhaps, more so than the old militarism. The strength of the grip of the war mania upon the peoples of the earth is well demonstrated by the fact that its leading nations are still committed to a policy of armament. The majority of the ruling classes still think too little in terms of the international spirit and too much in terms of war. Against this prevailing mind-set, however, a new purpose is more and more taking the field. One who has faith in the ultimate victory of reason cannot doubt that this new spirit, born of the wedlock of humanism and rationalism, must in the end triumph. The old militarism must go down before it, because, of all the traditions with a contemporary vogue, it is the most vulnerable and the most shameful.

One can bring many accusations against the psychology induced by war and the fear of war, but none more final than that it is by nature always hysterical and never rational. No item in the logic of the apologists for war is, perhaps, more pitifully weak than the claim, continually heard, that militarists are always pacifists. In a book, filled to the brim with the usual militaristic lines of argument, called *Defenseless America,* Hudson Maxim (inventor of the Maxim gun, the Maxim silencer, and other pieces of army ordnance) raises his voice against what he calls "Dangerous Preachments," and declares that "the manufacturers of war materials are among the staunchest of peace men!"

A cartoon, very typical of many produced during the World War, pictures a doughboy running forward savagely, with shining bayonet poised for action while in the background stands a beautiful figure of Peace with finger pointed toward the foe, evidently urging the youth on. And the title of the cartoon is "The Peace-

maker!" Surely the figure that sends youth on such a mission is not Peace but Death. And that the way of the bayonet is the way of blood has been seen, even since the war, in Morocco, Egypt, India, China, and Nicaragua. Furthermore, much talk is still heard about preparedness as a way to peace when all past experience proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that preparedness leads not to peace but to war. The plain truth is that these militaristic groups which exist in every country pin their faith on nothing but armed might. They cannot think of other nations except as potential foes. When they speak they are prepared to speak only with bayonets red with life, and bullets winged with death. Cutting throats and stopping beating hearts and ruining towns is their business.

Another claim in behalf of war made by its defenders is the contention that every loss sustained in awful conflict will be fully compensated for in the ensuing peace. A perfect example of this false plea is found in Eden Phillpotts' poem, "To a Mother":

> Robbed mother of the stricken Motherland—
> Two hearts in one and one among the dead,
> Before your grave with an uncovered head
> I, that am man, disquiet and silent stand
> In reverence. It is your blood they shed;
> It is your sacred self that they demand,
> For one you bore in joy and hope, and planned
> Would make yourself eternal, now has fled.
>
> But though you yielded him unto the knife
> And altar with a royal sacrifice
> Of your most precious self and dearer life—
> Your master gem and pearl above all price—
> Content you; for the dawn this night restores
> Shall be the dayspring of his soul and yours.

He who tries to comfort a mother whose son has died in war should not resort to the nonsense that peace can heal all her wounds. The plain fact is that peace after war is a disillusionment. All shadows do not flee. All wounds are not healed. Not years but centuries must pass before the healing of the hates and sufferings and sorrows of a few months of war.

Another fallacy one always hears advanced in behalf of war is that the battlefield is the only proving-ground which brings out red-blooded manhood in its full glory. Here, for instance, is the way it is cleverly put by a Canadian army officer:

> War inoculates men with a rude but effective philosophy, for the soldier experiences much of life in little time. If he desires it he may have woman's love. . . . (He) becomes

> familiar with death and is no longer horrified by the word. . . . The average man who has been through the grinding and buffing comes out wiser. He comes out with more self-respect, born of self-knowledge; there is no man he cannot look in the eye, and there are many who cannot look in his. If he longs for posterity he may without shame ask the woman of his choice to risk her life in bearing him children, for he has risked his own life, and the verdict of the gods has been that he should survive. He has met the immemorial test of his sex, and has come out with honor. . . .

So the current delusion that peace breeds weaklings and war makes men gathers force until we all believe it true. In our mind violence means strength and meekness is synonymous with weakness. Honor, valor, faith, glory are only attainable in the midst of war's red madness. This spirit is well expressed in Robert W. Service's poem, "The Song of the Soldier-Born":

> There's a glory gold never can buy to yearn and to cry for;
> There's a hope that's as old as the sky to suffer and sigh for;
> There's a faith that out-dazzles the sun to martyr and die for.
>
> Ah no! it's my dream that War will never be ended;
> That men will perish like men, and valour be splendid;
> That the Flag by the sword will be served, and honour defended.

And now to cap the climax we shall quote a good lord primate of Ireland, a certain Dr. Alexander, who could sing:

> They say that war is hell, the great accurst,
> The sin impossible to be forgiven;
> Yet I can look upon it at its worst
> And still see blue in Heaven.
> For when I note how nobly natures form
> Under the war's red rain, I deem it true
> That He who made the earthquake and the storm
> Perchance made battles too!

Always it has been easy for old men to sit safe in places aloof from danger and speak of seeing blue heaven in the midst of red hell. Tell that to the marines, and see what *they* say!

At the beginning of every war the potential soldier is lionized, pampered by those who stay safely at home, and promised fame and glory for service at the front. After the war it does not take him long to realize that all this hero stuff is a lot of pious tomfoolery. Its true worth emerges when he comes back asking for a job and a home and a chance to make his way. How many boys, for example, would ever find themselves independent enough to resist the demands upon them which war subtly engenders in the fair sex. Nothing wins the hearts of most women more quickly

than a uniform, a drum, a flag and the sound of martial music and marching feet. Nothing cheers the soldier's heart more than this knowledge that in the eyes of his sweetheart he is a hero.

But war doesn't make heroes out of men: it turns them either into disillusioned dupes or horrid, broken, still shapes on a battlefield. How discreetly the heart-breaking side of war can be kept in the background is well illustrated by Elbert Zaring:

> When our boys shall at last sail back o'er the deep
> With freedom established forever and ay,
> They shall not be unmindful, O lad, in your sleep
> But tenderly stooping shall bear you away. . . .

Why wait to bear them away when the rest "sail back o'er the deep"? Because General Pershing has recommended in the interest of morale that no bodies should be sent back till after the war!

In "America's Home-coming" Archie Coates gives vent to a pæan of elation over the men pouring back from France:

> The march of a million men,
> And a million more of them after!
> Flooding the Eastern coast
> Is American vision and strength,
> Tanned from the suns of the steppes,
> Ruddy cheeks from Verdun,
> Muscles made at Mihiel . . .
> (And they'd said we were soft from gold!)
>
> Tramp, tramp of men,
> Men and the smell of men,
> Swinging shoulders of men,
> The sun on their bayonets,
> Sun on their flags . . . and scars!
> Songs and the laughs of men,
> Thoughtful eyes of men
> And the crude, broad jests of the male.
>
> Tramp, tramp of men
> Fresh from the Flemish hell,
> Hot racing blood from the West,
> Red with the flame of Youth,
> Red with success and joy.
>
> Glory, America's men,
> America's heart full of song;
> America's head in the stars!

This is splendid description of the homecoming of our soldiers. But not a word concerning those who will never march again! Not gassed, and maddened! What about the million wrecks in body, soul and mind who crept back to die or have their hearts broken over again by a country that did not care? Or the hundred thou-

sand who lay quite still in France? Why cannot some people see that to be squashed by the monster Mars as a giant might tread down an ant is neither a gallant nor a glorious death?

Another element of fallacy in all war philosophy is the familiar claim that the present war is always a fight for a holy cause. Thus Theodosia Garrison:

> *"Ours!"* the heart within us cries. Nay, but these are more
> Even, men-at-arms of God who wage a holy war
> In the cause His soldier-saints fought and conquered for!
>
> Lord, for us, the waiting ones, watchers in the night,
> Change our selfish fears to pride, let us see aright
> The honor of the Service, the glory of the Fight!
>
> Give us faith to know Thy sword was never bared in vain,
> Give us vision to behold, above the fields of pain,
> The splendor of the sacrifice that saves a world again!

Even the Christian organizations of the land urged the boys on to battle as shown by these fiery lines in *Association Men:*

> Then strip for battle. Pause and talk no more.
> The word is said. You know the word was right.
> The Past is dead. Your only task is War,
> Relentless War; so strip yourself—and fight!
> Fight with the power your splendid Youth bestows—
> Your thews are mighty, and your sinews strong.
> Fight with a purpose silent, grim, that blows
> Not hot and cold, but marches straight along
> To Victory. Fight on, with hand, and brain,
> And heart, and wealth, and service, till the day
> When Innocence and Purity again
> Can walk unguarded, unafraid, the way
> Of Peace; when Faith and Honor, as of yore,
> Hold plighted words in bands of steel and gold
> Unbreakable; when Right is Lord once more
> Of all the World, and Freedom's wings enfold
> The Earth. Fight on, and spare not, till the foe
> Is on his knees: until, from East to West,
> The World is safe, and Pity whispers low,
> "Your task is done." *Then* sheathe your sword—and rest.

And Bliss Carman can speak for murder in the name of Christ, and for the use of bullets in defense of the faith:

> In the name of the Master of Manhood,
> Who taught that man is divine,
> Spirit and mind and body,
> They hold the supporting line.
> Till the world that sits in darkness
> Shall walk in the light of noon
> They will wear the triple chevron
> Defending their faith Triune.

The logical end of this reasoning, that wholesale slaughter and destruction can become a holy business, is the brazen cynicism which crops out here and there in the writings of Nietzsche: "You say that a good cause hallows war? *I tell you that a good war hallows every cause!*"

That beauty and pathos and tenderness characterize many of these poems inspired by the great conflict is not to be denied, but so often one looks in vain for the full truth, for an adequate understanding of the forces which rush us off our feet when the tide of war hits us. Take the great poem by Alan Seeger, who was killed in action with the Foreign Legion of France, " I Have a Rendezvous with Death." Although one of the greatest poems which the war produced, yet it is disappointing, for it is totally lacking in any hint of its author's first-hand knowledge of the fury and futility of modern warfare:

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

There perfectly put is the tragedy of loyal, but blinded, youth going to death in the shambles, in the springtime when the first meadow-flowers appear.

Another pitfall for the unwary in militaristic reasoning is an assumption, either expressed or implied, that loyalty to one's own land makes the slaying of citizens of another land a noble thing to do if war has broken out between the two countries. From boy-

hood up the patriotic duty of enlisting in the event of war is drilled into the minds of youth. So the average soldier goes into battle with the care-free spirit of Tennyson's old couplet:

> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do or die. . . .

How many went forth to slay and be slain in the great war as (in the words of John R. Rathom):

> a simple soldier, with the flame
> Of duty bidding him to Calvary! . . .

Or with something of that vague sense of a proper surrender of oneself to the Master Hand, as Alan Seeger, so unforgettably, put it:

> There was a stately drama writ
> By the hand that peopled the earth and air,
> And set the stars in the infinite,
> And made night gorgeous and morning fair,
> And all that had sense to reason knew
> That bloody drama must be gone through—
> Some sat and watched how the action veered—
> Waited, profited, trembled, cheered—
> We saw not clearly nor understood,
> But yielding ourselves to the master hand,
> Each in his part as best he could,
> We played it through as the author planned.

Another mischievous anodyne always current in war time is that this is a war to protect the weak. In countless preachments during the recent conflict this pretentious subterfuge was resorted to in order to circumvent any tendency to falter in the support of the war. Thus did Robert E. Speer set forth what many called "clear and convincing argument" in defense of a Christian nation taking up the sword:

> Such a war as the American nation believes it is waging now, a war in defense of human rights, of weak nations, of innocent and inoffensive peoples, an unselfish war in which the nation seeks absolutely nothing for itself and is willing to spend everything in order that all men, including its enemies, may be free. . . . Life is a sacred thing, but there are times when some lives must be sacrificed that others may be saved. . . . War is killing, but a war against war is a war against killing. . . . Jesus clearly bade us to yield our own rights, but he did not bid us to yield our duties. If one smites us on our own cheek we are to turn to him the other, but if he smites a little child on one cheek he will not smite it on the other if we have the strength and the love of Christ in us.

As we look back on the last great war can we honestly discern any unselfish defense of human rights? Here is how Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick answers that question: "A modern war to protect the weak—that is a grim joke! Look at the facts: 10,000,000 dead soldiers, 3,000,000 presumably dead soldiers . . . 20,000,000 wounded, 3,000,000 prisoners, 9,000,000 war orphans, 5,000,000 war widows, 10,000,000 refugees. What do you mean by modern war protecting the weak?"

One of the most shameful accompaniments of all war-hysteria is the industrious circulation among the people of the dictum that this war is a contest between the forces of heaven and the forces of hell. In a sermon, preached by a noted divine in the city of Boston during the World War, entitled "The Fight for Liberty Is God's Fight," it was proclaimed:

> The issue of this struggle is the culmination of innumerable past struggles. The cause at stake surpasses all other causes. The future of the world is comprehended in the issue. On the one hand a world irradiated with light and glowing with the warmth of loving kindness, opening up the virile forces of nature in a myriad of beneficent ways to bless mankind; but on the other hand the forces of hell dominant to oppress and destroy. . . . The allies are fighting not only for the preservation of their own rights and liberties but are instruments in the Lord's hands to restore and establish the liberties of the whole world. . . .

And here is a poem which was written by one who was on the scene when a German shell struck a church in Paris on Good Friday, 1918, killing seventy-five persons:

> Woman, you say? Crushed lifeless by stones—
> Dead—in a church? Women and babes at prayer,
> Four score, all dead? Four score and ten more there
> Writhing; men pray while labored organ tones
> Shudder in final anguish like groans—
> "Save them—" and falter on the ghastly air
> One last long sob. List! 'Tis the chancel where
> The Spring wind wanders wearily and moans.
> That was Good Friday for the Huns in France!
> That was efficiency and murder wed!
> Hold!—Let the Virgin's eyes look on her dead
> Who sought a little comfort of their Lord,
> Peace—pity—prayers for the lone Altar red,
> As for the Huns—God damn the Huns! THE SWORD!

So spawns madness in the wake of war!

During the World War it was commonly remarked on platform,

in pulpit and press that the Kaiser was the champion of an old, false, tribal god of battle. Thus Winifred Kirkland:

> . . . the approach to God is to-day immediate, intense, practical, in its cry for instant guidance through this horror. A few years ago we avoided thinking about God as easily as we avoided thinking about death. That indifference is destroyed. We find thoughtful men, especially in England and France, looking back with shame at our days of facile faithlessness, equally aghast at our former disregard of the divine, and at the Kaiser's championship of a tribal God of battle revived from an age grown almost legendary.

Even usually inspiring and sane Henry Van Dyke could so lose himself in the morass of war-propaganda as to speak of the Germans as a people who worship no god but "naked Might." We quote a stanza from his poem, "Liberty Enlightening the World":

O cruel is the conquer-lust in Hohenzollern brains:
The paths they plot to gain their goal are dark with shameful stains:
No faith they keep, no law revere, no god but naked Might;—
They are the foemen of mankind. Up, Liberty, and smite!

Another poem from another hand, typical of the tendency to deny our foes all right of access to our own God, reads:

> Kaiser, when you'd kneel in prayer
> Look upon your hands, and there
> Let the deep and awful stain
> From the blood of children slain
> Burn your very soul with shame,
> Till you dare not breathe that Name
> That now you glibly advertise—
> God as one of your allies!

But Germans were not the only ones who glibly advertised that God was on their side. Every nation in the World War did it. One could fill a couple of tomes with poems that were written to show that the allies were engaged in the war business in company with God.

Much execration was heaped during war-days upon this the German "Hymn of Hate," written by Ernest Lissauer: here it is in translation:

> French and Russian they matter not,
> A blow for a blow and a shot for a shot,
> We love them not,
> We hate them not,
> We hold the Weichsel and Vosges gate,
> We have but one and only hate,
> We love as one, we hate as one,
> We have one foe and one alone.

He is known to you all, he is known to you all,
He crouches behind the dark gray flood,
Full of envy, of rage, of craft, of gall,
Cut off by waves that are thicker than blood.
Come let us stand at the Judgment place
An oath to swear to, face to face.
An oath of bronze no wind can shake,
An oath for our sons and their sons to take,
Come hear the word, repeat the word,
Throughout the Fatherland make it heard:
We will never forego our hate,
We have all but a single hate,
We love as one, we hate as one,
We have one foe and one alone,
England!

At the Captain's mess, in the Banquet-hall,
Sat feasting the officers, one and all,—
Like a saber-blow, like the swing of a sail,
One raised his glass, held high to hail;
Sharp-snapped like the stroke of a rudder's play,
Spoke three words only: "To the day!"

Whose glass this fate?
They had all but a single hate.
Who was thus known?
They had one foe and one alone,
England!

Take you the folk of the earth in pay,
With bars of gold your ramparts lay,
Bedeck the ocean with bow on bow,
Ye reckon well, but not well enough now.
French and Russian, they matter not,
A blow for a blow, a shot for a shot,
We fight the battle with bronze and steel,
And the time that is coming, Peace will seal.

You will we hate with a lasting hate,
We will never forego our hate.
Hate by water and hate by land,
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,
Hate of the hammer and hate of the Crown,
Hate of seventy millions choking down.
We love as one, we hate as one,
We have one foe and one alone: ENGLAND!

As hymns of hate go this noted German outburst is not particularly savage. There is bitterness and hatred in it, to be sure, but the same may be said of a large collection of French, English and American war-rhymes. Thus speaks William Hunter for the U. S. A.:

Lend me your gift to hate, Ye Furies' Clan.
Lest I forget;
May God forgive the wish, all kindness ban,
Even in thought, eke action, and in prayer.
This must be banished from the creeds of man
Who have what we have to avenge and bear.
Teach me to hate, forgiveness to forswear,
Forever, ay! and then!

The time has come, has come, when the Christ's cross
Must yield, its gentle message give way to the sword;
When man must count love and forgiveness loss,
And by the wish to slay, to slay, alone be stirred!

And thus Robert Grant for the British:

Ride, Cossacks, ride! Charge, Turcos, charge! The fateful hour has come.
Let all the guns of Britain roar or be forever dumb.
The superman has burst his bonds. With Kultur-flag unfurled
And prayer on lip he runs amuck, imperilling the world.

O world grown sick with butchery and manifold distress!
O broken Belgium robbed of all save grief and ghastliness!
Should Prussian power enslave the world and arrogance prevail,
Let chaos come, let Moloch rule, and Christ give place to Baal!

Nor did Germany have much on France either, when the hymn-hating game was being exploited: Here is "A Song of Hate" by Henri de Regnier:

I swear to cherish in my heart this hate
Till my last heart-throb wanes;
So may the sacred venom of my blood
Mingle and charge my veins!

May there pass never from my darkened brow
The furrows hate has worn!
May they plough deeper in my flesh, to mark
The outrage I have borne!

By towns in flames, by my fair fields laid waste,
By hostages undone,
By cries of murdered women and of babes,
By each dead warrior son. . . .

I take my oath of hatred and of wrath
Before God, and before
The holy waters of the Marne and Aisne,
Still ruddy with French gore;

And fix my eyes upon immortal Rheims,
Burning from nave to porch,
Lest I forget, lest I forget who lit
The sacrilegious torch!

The rectifying years are leaving us all with far more fair and tolerant attitudes and opinions than those which carried us off our feet during the war. Hymns of hate are interesting now only as they reveal to us the strange tricks war plays with ordinarily rational people. We know now that if there was any guilt for the World War it was a common guilt, that all the nations of Europe were mutually responsible for the conditions that gave rise to the war. For such a colossal explosion it took centuries to lay the gunpowder and dynamite of economic collision and racial conflict. The common people were caught like galley slaves on a burning ship.

One of the most tragic pieces of loose logic produced by the war-experience was the plea in extenuation heard in many churches, namely, that the war was proving itself a blessing because many were spiritually aroused by its afflictions and brought closer to Christ. Amelia Burr sounds this note in "The White Comrade":

> For just a thought, a disembodied dream
> That some call Nothing—when they knew the wrench
> Of raveled nerves, the squalor of the trench,
> The dying look's reproach, the scarlet steam
> Of battle hand to hand—amid that hell
> Of agony they looked into the eyes
> They had not seen, in days when all was well.
> Out of the marsh of death they saw Him rise
> In the white robes that gladdened Galilee,
> Walking the hot red waves of blood and flame
> As long ago He came
> To those that laboured on a troubled sea.
> And they, who had forgotten Him so long,
> Remembered that those wounded hands were strong
> And infinitely kind . . .
> O Lord of Love! shall we not understand,
> Who in our comfort are as grossly blind?
> We prosper to the height of our desire—
> How should our rich and busy hands require
> Aught of the Wounded Hand?
> Till comes a day when we are under fire,
> Spent, bleeding, stripped of our complacent pride,
> And beaten to the last extremity,
> Then, a living presence at our side,
> White Comrade, we find—Thee!

Should it be necessary to create "that hell of agony" in order to become acquainted with the White Comrade? Is it fair to say that the appalling suffering of war is justified because, perchance, some people get a vision of a new Leader and a new World? I can conceive of many better ways to sow the seeds of a new mankind than the way that leads to war's grim harvest. Surely not by war will we come nearer to the Prince of Peace. Surely not again can

youth be lured to the field of blood by the specious plea that they shall thereby serve the Lord; as, in the recent conflict, one writer had it:

> This was the gleam then that lured from far
> Your son and my son to the Holy War:
> Your son and my son for the accolade
> With the banner of Christ over them, in steel arrayed! . . .
>
> . . . . . .

To originate, foster and establish the spirit of peace among men is the primary business of all churches. Every church, no matter what its creed or membership, ought to be, first and foremost, a fellowship of the spirit of peace. And yet through the centuries churches, organized in the name of the great Lover of peace, have betrayed his hope. Christ was born with a song of peace ringing out above his manger-cradle. But he died with a spear-thrust in his side. And countless christs since then have died, like him, because the song was lost and the hope betrayed. And the hope will always be betrayed until we see that the world of peace must be reared as one would build a great and beautiful building. So long as there is economic injustice, so long as there is racial inequality, so long as there are hate and fear and suspicion and greed, our house is built on top of a volcano. So long as these things exist in the world the old conflict slumbers and smoulders beneath the shallow surface of our social life. All our pacts and platitudes, all our tracts and conferences are worth exactly nothing unless we rebuild the foundations upon which our social structure is reared. Peace involves a new economic structure, a new equality, a new brotherhood, a new and utter love. The early dead of all the ages cry out their bitter challenge to our complacence and call us to rebuild the civilized world.

While the voice of the church has been silent as often as the cause of "peace on earth good will to men" was put in jeopardy, the voice of poesy has sounded in its behalf across the world. And no medium could be chosen better adapted to body forth the vision of a warless world. Here insight and emotion are simply and purely blended. Here human expression reaches its peak of fearlessness and prophethood. Here the dream of the human heart sings its way out in clearest, truest tones.

The poetry which celebrates peace has a peculiar charm and a power all its own, both springing from the stark realism bred in the bones of those who go down to Armageddon. I think the present volume will show that Edmund Gosse was wrong when he wrote in the war days of 1915 that "there is a quality in war, as there

is in religion, which does not lend itself kindly to the art of verse . . . and as a matter of critical experience, the lyrical triumphs of martial and religious poetry are few!" For out of the fusion of that type of religion, which is the hope of peace, and that awful horror, which is the thing called war, has come some of the most moving music in our literature. Here a noble company speaks the age-long cry—*the cry for peace.*

The voices of many of these singers are long since stilled. Others are wounded or crippled. Still others have become embittered by disillusionment, and who of us shall blame them? Whole in body they are broken in heart. Here is a *memorabilia sacra,* such as time may never see again.

O! comrades, alive or dead, out of a great love we salute you, in token of what you have accomplished with your verse for the great dream of Peace!

> And he shall judge among many peoples,
> And rebuke strong nations afar off;
> And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
> And their spears into pruninghooks:
> Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
> Neither shall they learn war any more. . . .
>
> MICAH

> And there was with the angel
> A multitude of the heavenly host,
> Praising God and saying,
> Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth Peace, good will among men!
>
> LUKE

God of All Nations

God of all nations,
We pray for all the peoples of thy earth,
For those who are consumed in mutual hatred and bitterness,
For those who make bloody war upon their neighbors,
For those who tyrannously oppress,
For those who groan under cruelty and subjection.
We pray thee for all those who bear rule and responsibility,
For child races and dying races,
For outcast tribes, the backward and downtrodden,
For the ignorant, wretched, and the enslaved.
We beseech thee, teach mankind to live together in peace,
No man exploiting the weak, no man hating the strong,
Each race working out its own destiny,
Unfettered, self-respecting, fearless.
Teach us to be worthy of freedom,
Free from social wrong, free from individual oppression and contempt,
Pure of heart and hand, despising none, defrauding none,
Giving to all men in all the dealings of life
The honor we owe to those who are thy children,
Whatever their color, their race, or their caste.

—From A Book of Prayers for Use in an Indian College

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I

THE OUTBREAK

THE ILLUSION OF WAR

Richard Le Gallienne

War
I abhor;
And yet how sweet
The sound along the marching street
Of drum and fife, and I forget
Broken old mothers, and the whole
Dark butchery without a soul.

Without a soul—save this bright treat
Of heady music, sweet as hell;
And even my peace-abiding feet
Go marching with the marching street,
For yonder goes the fife,
And what care I for human life!

The tears fill my astonished eyes,
And my full heart is like to break,
And yet it is embannered lies,
A dream those drummers make.

Oh, it is wickedness to clothe
Yon hideous, grinning thing that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen
That in a garden of glory walks,
Till good men love the thing they loathe;
Art, thou hast many infamies,
But not an infamy like this.
Oh, snap the fife and still the drum,
And show the monster as she is.

PERSEUS

Clinton Scollard

The old Medusa War, of grim array,
  Lo, we had deemed the grisly horror dead!
May there arise some Perseus Peace to slay
  This new Medusa of the gorgon head!

MOBILIZATION IN BRITTANY[1]

GRACE FALLOW NORTON

Last night the men of this region were leaving. Now they are far.
Rough and strong they are, proud and gay they are.
So this is the way of war. . . .

The train was full and we all shouted as it pulled away.
They sang an old war-song, they were true to themselves, they were gay!
We might have thought they were going for a holiday—

Except for something in the air,
Except for the weeping of the ruddy old women of Finistère.
The younger women do not weep. They dream and stare.

They seem to be walking in dreams. They seem not to know
It is their homes, their happiness, vanishing so.
(Every strong man between twenty and forty must go.)

They sang an old war-song. I have heard it often in other days,
But never before when War was walking the world's highways.
They sang, they shouted, the Marseillaise!

The train went and another has gone, but none, coming, has brought word.
Though you may know, you, out in the world, we have not heard,
We are not sure that the great battalions have stirred—
Except for something, something in the air,
Except for the weeping of the wild old women of Finistère.
How long will the others dream and stare?

The train went. The strong men of this region are all away, afar.
Rough and strong they are, proud and gay they are.
So this is the way of war. . . .

[1] Abridged.

GODS OF WAR

A. E.

Fate wafts us from the pygmies' shore:
We swim beneath the epic skies:
A Rome and Carthage war once more,
And wider empires are the prize;
Where the beaked galleys clashed, lo, these
Our iron dragons of the seas!

High o'er the mountains' dizzy steep
The winged chariots take their flight.
The steely creatures of the deep
Cleave the dark waters' ancient night.
Below, above, in wave, in air
New worlds for conquest everywhere.

More terrible than spear or sword
Those stars that burst with fiery breath:
More loud the battle cries are poured
Along a hundred leagues of death.
So do they fight. How have ye warred,
Defeated Armies of the Lord?

This is the Dark Immortal's hour;
His victory, whoever fail;
His prophets have not lost their power:
Cæsar and Attila prevail.
These are your legions still, proud ghosts,
These myriad embattled hosts.

How wanes thine empire, Prince of Peace!
With the fleet circling of the suns
The ancient gods their power increase.
Lo, how Thine own anointed ones
Do pour upon the warring bands
The devil's blessings from their hands!

Who dreamed a dream mid outcasts born
Could overbrow the pride of kings?
They pour on Christ the ancient scorn.
His Dove its gold and silver wings
Has spread. Perhaps it nests in flame
In outcasts who abjure His name.

Choose ye your rightful gods, nor pay
Lip reverence that the heart denies,
O Nations. Is not Zeus to-day,
The thunderer from the epic skies,
More than the Prince of Peace? Is Thor
Not nobler for a world at war?

They fit the dreams of power we hold,
Those gods whose names are with us still.
Men in their image made of old
The high companions of their will.
Who seek an airy empire's pride,
Would they pray to the Crucified?

O outcast Christ, it was too soon
For flags of battle to be furled
While life was yet at the high noon.
Come in the twilight of the world:
Its kings may greet Thee without scorn
And crown Thee then without a thorn.

WINE FOR THE KING

CLINTON SCOLLARD

What is the word of the wind? The word of the wind is *War!*—
All of the olden horror! Moloch and Mars and Thor,
These supreme and sole, with Peace but a trampled thing,
Rapine and lust and famine, and blood for the wine of the King!

Tears may gather and fall through all of the stricken lands;
The kine may brood in the stall, the harvest rot where it stands;
The cup may be brimmed with gall, with the sweat of suffering
For others—and yet, and yet, there must be wine for the King!

What of the awful cost? What of the price to pay?
What of the loved and lost upon many a sanguine day?
What of the bells that toll?—Hark, how the echoes ring!—
Naught, for there must be wine—red, red wine for the King!

VICARIOUS ATONEMENT

RICHARD ALDINGTON

There is an old and very cruel god

. . . . .

We will endure;
We will try not to wince
When he crushes and rends us.
If indeed it is for your sakes,
If we perish or moan in torture,
Or stagger under sordid burdens
That you may live—
Then we can endure.

If our wasted blood
Makes bright the page
Of poets yet to be;
If this our tortured life
Saved from destruction's nails
Gold words of a Greek long dead;
Then we can endure,
Then hope,
Then watch the sun rise
Without utter bitterness.
But, O thou old and very cruel god,
Take if thou canst,
This bitter cup from us.

THE CALL TO ARMS

CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN

Drums of doom are marching to the battle.
The bugle calls of death are crying, crying.
Come, Youth, the gods of hate demand your chattel!
Men, many men are needed for the dying!

The martial music of the regiments
Blare their insistent summons. From a hill
Bold banners float above ten thousand tents
Where multitudes are learning how to kill.

Hate, still thy drums! War, make thy trumpets mute!
Earth, stay vain sacrifice of singing sons
Gone forth to massacre! Love, give salute!
God! Save young laughter from the lust of guns!

THE VAMPIRE

CONRAD AIKEN

She rose among us where we lay.
She wept, we put our work away.
She chilled our laughter, stilled our play;
And spread a silence there.
And darkness shot across the sky,
And once, and twice, we heard her cry;
And saw her lift white hands on high
And toss her troubled hair.

What shape was this who came to us,
With basilisk eyes so ominous,
With mouth so sweet, so poisonous,
And tortured hands so pale?
We saw her wavering to and fro,
Through dark and wind we saw her go;
Yet what her name was did not know;
And felt our spirits fail.

We tried to turn away; but still
Above us heard her sorrow thrill;
And those who slept, they dreamed of ill
And dreadful things:
Of skies grown red with rending flames
And shuddering hills that cracked their frames;
Of twilights foul with wings;

And skeletons dancing to a tune;
And cries of children stifled soon;
And over all a blood-red moon
A dull and nightmare size.
They woke, and sought to go their ways,
Yet everywhere they met her gaze.
Her fixed and burning eyes.

Who are you now,—we cried to her—
Spirit so strange, so sinister?
We felt dead winds above us stir;
And in the darkness heard
A voice fall, singing, cloying sweet,
Heavily dropping, through that heat,
Heavy as honeyed pulses beat,
Slow word by anguished word.

And through the night strange music went
With voice and cry so darkly blent
We could not fathom what they meant;
Save only that they seemed
To thin the blood along our veins,
Foretelling vile, delirious pains,
And clouds divulging blood-red rains
Upon a hill undreamed.

And this we heard: "Who dies for me,
He shall possess me secretly,
My terrible beauty he shall see,
And slake my body's flame.
But who denies me cursed shall be,
And slain, and buried loathesomely,
And slimed upon with shame."

And darkness fell. And like a sea
Of stumbling deaths we followed, we
Who dared not stay behind.
There all night long beneath a cloud
We rose and fell, we struck and bowed,
We were the ploughman and the ploughed,
Our eyes were red and blind.

And some, they said, had touched her side,
Before she fled us there;
And some had taken her to bride;
And some lain down for her and died;
And some, to whom she was denied,
Who had not touched her hair,
Ran to and fro and cursed and cried
And sought her everywhere.

"Her eyes have feasted on the dead,
And small and shapely is her head,

And dark and small her mouth," they said,
"And beautiful to kiss;
Her mouth is sinister and red
As blood in moonlight is."

Then poets forgot their jeweled words
And cut the sky with glittering swords;
And innocent souls turned carrion birds
To perch upon the dead.
Sweet daisy fields were drenched with death,
The air became a charnel breath,
Pale stones were splashed with red.

Green leaves were dappled bright with blood
And fruit trees murdered in the bud;
And when at length the dawn
Came green as twilight from the east,
And all that heaving horror ceased,
Silent was every bird and beast,
And that dark voice was gone.

No word was there, no song, no bell,
No furious tongue that dream to tell;
Only the dead, who rose and fell
Above the wounded men;
And whisperings and wails of pain
Blown slowly from the wounded grain,
Blown slowly from the smoking plain;
And silence fallen again.

Until at dusk, from God knows where,
Beneath dark birds that filled the air,
Like one who did not hear or care,
Under a blood-red cloud,
An aged ploughman came alone
And drove his share through flesh and bone,
And turned them under to mould and stone;
All night long he ploughed.

THE OLD MEN AND THE YOUNG MEN

WITTER BYNNER

Said the old men to the young men,
"Who will take arms to be free?"
Said the young men to the old men,
"We."

Said the old men to the young men,
"It is finished. You may go."
Said the young men to the old men,
"No."

Said the old men to the young men,
"What is there left to do?"
Said the young men to the old men,
"You."

PARABLE OF THE OLD MEN AND THE YOUNG

WILFRED OWEN

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretchèd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son. . . .

PREPAREDNESS

M. P. BOYNTON

O God, Eternal Right, command us now.
Here at the parting of the ways we stand,
Custom and greed cry out for armament,
And fear makes mock at our defenceless land.
The sons of war may one day cross the sea,
O God our help, dare we depend on Thee?

'Tis midnight, lo, within a garden black,
See One in grip of hell stand undismayed.
Rejected lies a sword beside his feet
And angel legions fain would give him aid.
He makes his choice in earth's supremest hour
And journey's forth to Calvary and power.

Our time has come to choose, God help us now!
Who takes the sword shall perish by the sword.
All lands have proved since history began
The sure fulfillment of that changeless word.
We arm, and peace turns back a thousand years.
We arm and die, the victims of our fears.

Throw down thine arms, O nation of God's hope!
We will not chain our land to ages dead,
But trusting love, dare all onslaughts of hell,
Like Him who trod for us the winepress red,
And count it glory, though we shed our blood;
So earth shall reap eternal brotherhood.

THE JEWISH CONSCRIPT

In Russia

FLORENCE K. FRANK

Christ also suffered, the righteous for the unrighteous.

They have dressed me up in a soldier's dress,
With a rifle in my hand,
And have sent me bravely forth to shoot
My own in a foreign land.

Oh, many shall die for the fields of their homes,
And many in conquest wild,
But I shall die for the fatherland
That murdered my little child.

How many hundreds of years ago—
The nations wax and cease!—
Did the God of our fathers doom us to bear
The flaming message of peace!

We are the mock and the sport of time!
Yet why should I complain!—
For the Jew that they hung on the bloody cross,
He also died in vain.

FIVE SOULS

W. N. Ewer

FIRST SOUL

I was a peasant of the Polish plain;
I left my plough because the message ran—
Russia, in danger, needed every man
To save her from the Teuton; and was slain.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

SECOND SOUL

I was a Tyrolese, a mountaineer:
I gladly left my mountain home to fight
Against the brutal, treacherous Muscovite;
And died in Poland on a Cossack spear.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

THIRD SOUL

I worked in Lyons at my weaver's loom,
When suddenly the Prussian despot hurled
His felon blow at France and at the world;
Then I went forth to Belgium and my doom.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

FOURTH SOUL

I owned a vineyard by the wooded Main,
Until the Fatherland begirt by foes
Lusting her downfall, called me, and I rose
Swift to the call—and died in fair Lorraine.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

FIFTH SOUL

I worked in a great shipyard by the Clyde:
There came a sudden word of wars declared,
Of Belgium peaceful, helpless, unprepared,
Asking our aid: I joined the ranks and died.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

HAUTE POLITIQUE

GRANVILLE TRACE

Driven to achievement by youth and love,
two met amid the polar waste,
where each knew the other for a hero.
They spoke of many things, felt themselves brothers.

When it was time to part Hidoyeshi said:
I'm glad you're a real patriot,
not one of these internationalists.
To hell with those! said Bradford.

While hands met in warm farewell
word came from the air: War!

Clasped together, under the snow,
like carcasses with horns locked,
two bodies drift.

THE MAN HE KILLED [1]

THOMAS HARDY

Had he and I but met
By some ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

[1] Abridged from "The Dynasts."

I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

He thought he'd enlist, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I—
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat, if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.

HARVARD DECLARES WAR!

Brent Dow Allinson [1]

"Hang out the flags!" the college president said,
"The war we dreaded is at last declared!" . . .
Crimson and white and bright arterial red—
Hang out the valiant gonfalons that shared
With Yale's o'ersicklied blue the football cheers!
Plant cannon in the Yard facing the town,
Turn seniors into sergeants; make them drill
Young sophomores in the goose-step up and down;
Conveniently forget the boast of years,
And where three hours' tramp from Bunker Hill
The ancient elm of Washington still rears
Its riven arms, stand up in cap and gown
Among the ranked alumni now and sing
With proud and lusty hearts: "God Save the King!"
Give all of them degrees who'll learn to kill
The Germans and their own creative will;
Exhort them into excellent credulous slaves,
Inspire, bedazzle, threaten, lash the waves
Of youth's fine frenzy; give to hate release!
Fair Harvard must be first in war as well as peace!

[1] Written in Leavenworth Prison.

Why hang this classic crimson in the Yard?
Why all this bunting for the vulgar's seeing?
Is it to bless the iron and the shard,—
Or in some football way to gladden being?
What has this brawl to do with art or learning?
Because stampeded men have now begun it
Do we pretend they have already won it?
Is there not quite enough for us to do
To keep the lamps of wisdom faintly burning—
To light this darkness with the just, the true? . . .
For very shame to be thus sold, defrauded
Because the captains and the goths applauded!
To see our citadel to plunderers bartered
And seal our eyes and lips while Truth is martyred! . . .
O rather, Harvard, in this shameful hour
When lamps are quenched and Madness rides on Power
Go place a fool's cap on thy founder's head
And where thy banners burn, O, hang instead
White sheets devised with cross-bones twain, and drape
Thy hallowed ivied walls with strands of sable crepe!

SONG AND CRY OF A SOLDIER IN THE LINES

Albert Edward Clements

Sharpen the sky to flashes of flame
Belching through bunches of dusty smoke.
War is coming, and war is a game
Where a king is a god, and a soldier's a joke
To be played on fields of warm red blood
Seething and spitting in heaving mud.

My son is going, your son is going!
March, boys, march, you're on your way to hell!
John and Henry, what will you be knowing
When a cross and dust mark where you fell?

Fight, you slimy lipped idiots, for one buck a day!
Bleed, kill, suffer, starve—and kiss the full breasted women stumbling before conquest.
Spit at the little red faced kids crying on their mothers' revealing skirts, guffaw at their wailing for fathers.
Heaven and Christ, what do they know about graves!

Shouts, curses, tears, cheers; lightning shots streaking the crazy clouds; ripping flesh, groaning men; splintered homes; muddy, shell-torn gardens;
Sagging skies spilling oozy, sticky rains as if blood were not greasy and wet enough.

How many years have I been away?
How many men have I killed today?
We went over the top at eleven sharp,
Through the shrapnel and dead, and the devil's harp
Played a tune that was mad with blood and smoke,
Played a tune that laughed when some brain broke!
I've never been mad, but I'm going quick.
The blood on my bayonet makes me sick,
And the crunch of cold flesh as I stumble along
Is a sound that hell would condemn as wrong.

Powdered monarchs at home, feasting, dancing, laughing; velvet stomachs lined, fortified, tickled with rich food.
Brains lined with solid wood. (What more could you expect?)
Thousands, millions, ten thousand millions of white crosses stuck crooked, ghostlike, over worm eaten boxes; a sea of salty tears, an ocean of widows weeping.
A world of sucking, wailing fatherless children; two worlds of fields blooming from muddy broken ground into scented flowers,
Into lush crops.
Anything that came out of the earth is good fertilizer;
Man came out of the earth.

How many men were killed today?
Ten thousand will never again draw their pay!
Ten thousand will never again see the sun.
They were good soldiers and their work is done.

Perhaps a red rose can tell the name of some dead soldier whose blood it bears.
For quiet has come once again.
After war the silence of a void, the song of a wind gone down.

My son is going, your son is going!
March, boys, march, you're on your way to hell!
John and Henry, what will you be knowing
When a cross and dust mark where you fell?

WAR

Witter Bynner

Fools, fools, fools,
Your blood is hot to-day.
    It cools
When you are clay.
It joins the very clod
Wherein you look at God,
Wherein at last you see
    The living God,
    The loving God,
Which was your enemy.

TO A FRIEND WANTING WAR

Struthers Burt

I trust that when the bugles blow,
And the little drums beat, the little drums beat,
You'll hear no single sound of them,
Nor any sound of marching feet;
The pulsing drums and bugles shrill
Stir a heart against its will.

There should not be a flag for you,
When the little drums beat, the little drums beat,
But you should find a murdered man
With his blood, all black about his feet;
And though you'd never heard his name,
They'd hold you screaming out with shame.

There would not be another sound,
No little drum's beat, no little drum's beat,
Till silence like a rising hell
Had cut your voice at your feet,
Leaving you dumb eternally
To think on death's monotony.

THE WINE PRESS

ALFRED NOYES

A murdered man, ten miles away,
Will hardly shake your peace,
Like one red stain upon your hand;
And a tortured child in a distant land
Will never check one smile today,
    Or bid one fiddle cease.

THE NEWS

It comes along a little wire,
Sunk in a deep sea;
It thins in the clubs to a little smoke
Between one joke and another joke,
For a city in flames is less than the fire
    That comforts you and me.

THE DIPLOMATS

Each was honest after his way,
    Lukewarm in faith, and old;
And blood to them was only a word,
And the point of a phrase their only sword,
And the cost of war, they reckoned it
    In little disks of gold.

They were cleanly groomed. They were not to be bought.
    And their cigars were good.
But they had pulled so many strings
In the tinselled puppet-show of kings
That when they talked of war they thought
    Of sawdust, not of blood;

Not of the crimson tempest
    Where the shattered city falls:
They thought, behind their varnished doors,
Of diplomats, ambassadors,
Budgets and loans and boundary-lines
    Coercions and recalls.

THE CHARGE

Slaughter! Slaughter! Slaughter!
    The cold machines whirred on.
And strange things crawled amongst the wheat

With entrails dragging round their feet,
And over the foul red shambles
A fearful sunlight shone. . . .

The Maxims cracked like cattle-whips
Above the struggling hordes.
They rolled and plunged and writhed like snakes
In the trampled wheat and the blackthorn brakes,
And the lightning leapt among them
Like clashing crimson swords.

The rifles flogged their wallowing herds,
Flogged them down to die.
Down on their slain the slayers lay,
And the shrapnel thrashed them into the clay,
And tossed their limbs like tattered birds
Thro' a red volcanic sky. . . .

MILITARY DRILL

E. Merrill Root

While the clouds float calm and free
Over mountain forests, see
Murder in its infancy!—
There they drill and drill again
Into soldiers—who were men.
In the antique Roman way,
Hypnotized toward murder, they
For—and by—whom Jesus died
Learn technique of homicide.

See the human clock-work wheel—
Not conscious men, but cogs of steel.
Theirs a cog-wheel cruelty:
They see, and know not what they see.
Trim, metallic, like cold wasps—
Or a wheel that never rasps—
Mechanism grown pedantic—
Through their homicidal antic
Without reason, without will,
Theirs but to do . . . and kill,

Every soul become a fraction
Of a schooled mob's reflex action—
Move these living bayonets,
Murder's witless marionettes.

Like vast scissor-blades of snow,
Snip-snap, snip-snap, see them go
Through their trim maneuvers' mesh—
A Cubist painting come to flesh!
Legs of a whole rank flip and flirt
As though they wore a single skirt.

So trim and fine! Why think of war?
The hypnotists discreetly pour
For each soldier's infancy
The milk of human cruelty!

Few see, upon their spotless white,
Gouts of blood burn ghastly bright!

R. O. T. C.

E. Merrill Root

The sons of the Republic drill
Like sheep with wolves' fangs, meek to kill.

See Whitman's countrymen learn culture—
Apprentice-butchers of the vulture!—
Learn "the dear love of comrades" jagging
Their bayonets thru the dummy's bagging!
(Since human bowels are too dear—
Or obvious—to use in mere
Practice.) Incipient A. B.'s
Take slaughter-courses toward degrees:
Knowledge of Plato is a trifle
To making bull's-eyes with a rifle;
Training to slit a human belly
Can supplement a course in Shelley.

Uniforms turn each various soul
Alike as lumps of sorted coal.

Unanimous feet tick-tock, tick-tock. . . .
Each Robot is a well-wound clock:
Each one will tick, and turn, and strike
Whatever hour the Times may like. . . .

Important bantams, slick in spurs,
Give orders like real officers;
Meekly the dumb herd to and fro—
Automata of empire—go;
And pretty co-eds clap to see
The new Goose-step Fraternity!

TO A CERTAIN VERY UGLY BUILDING

The Armory

VINCENT G. BURNS

Minotaur of madness, you certainly belong there;
Mountain grim of black stone, with relevancy rare
You fit most perfectly your slum environment.

In this shambles where every undertaker thrives,
Where not one thing is quite so cheap as human lives,
You are Death's eloquent, ideal advertisement.

You go up mid tenements where out of fetid rooms
Our cocky Irish lads march gaily to their dooms,
Go down to Armageddon with a glory in their eyes.

Just to lie down on winter's night in warm, clean bed,
To know the joys of comradeship, to be well-fed,
To slum-hell dwellers—what a door to Paradise!

So they laugh, and snatch their guns from out your bloody hands;
What a lark to leave the shop, and ship for foreign lands!
These crippled Christs know no such sport in their drab, dull peace.

Right merrily with cheers they welcome every war,
With hearts full of hope and joy they throng your gaping door,
War means not death and doom to these, but gay release!

But ghost-haunted are your shadowy halls of gloom,
Your gray roof's a shroud and your sooty walls a tomb,
A tomb for herded, blinded saints of our humanity;

A tomb where throng the ghosts of an uncounted host,
A tomb where ruins lie of a myriad cities lost,
O slumtown symbol of war's grim insanity!

SURE, IT'S FUN!

Richard Butler Glaenzer

What fun to be a soldier!—Everykid

Sure, it's fun to be a soldier! Oh, it's fun, fun, fun,
Upon an iron shoulder-blade to tote a feather gun;
To hike with other brave galoots in easy-going army-boots;
To pack along a one-ounce sack, the commissary on your track;
To tramp, tramp, tramp, to a right-and-ready camp!
Fun?—Sure, it's fun, just the finest ever, son!

Yes, it's fun to be a soldier! Oh, it's fun, fun, fun,
To loaf along a level road beneath a cloudless sun
Or over fields of golden grain, kept cool by puffs of wind and rain;
Then richly, more-than-fully, fed, to stretch upon a downy bed
And sleep, sleep, sleep, while the stay-at-homes weep!
Fun?—Sure, it's fun, just the finest ever, son!

Oh, it's fun to be a soldier! Oh, it's fun, fun, fun,
To catch the silly enemy and get 'em on the run;
To here and there blow off a head with just a bit of chuckling lead;
To bayonet a foolish bloke at hide-and-seek in trench and smoke;
To shoot, shoot, shoot, till they've got no legs to scoot!
Fun?—sure, it's fun, just the finest ever, son!

God, it's fun to be a soldier! Oh, it's fun, fun, fun,
To lie out still and easy when your day's sport's done;
With not a thing to worry for, nor anything to hurry for;
Not hungry, thirsty, tired, but a hero much-admired,
Just dead, dead, dead, like Jack and Bill and Fred!
Fun?—Sure, it's fun, just the finest ever, son!

ARMS AND THE BOY

WILFRED OWEN

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade
How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;
Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;
And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-heads
Which long to muzzle in the hearts of lads.
Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth,
Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple.
There lurk no claws behind his fingers supple;
And God will grow no talons at his heels,
Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

YOUTH IN ARMS

HAROLD MONRO

Happy boy, happy boy,
David the immortal-willed,
Youth a thousand times
Slain, but not once killed,
Swaggering again today
In the old contemptuous way;

Leaning backward from your thigh
Up against the tinselled bar—
Lust and ashes! is it you?
Laughing, boasting, there you are!
First we hardly recognized you
In your modern avatar.

Soldier, rifle, brown khaki—
Is your blood as happy so?
Where's your sling or painted shield,
Helmet, or your pike, or bow?
Well, you're going to the wars—
That is all you need to know.

Graybeards plotted. They were sad.
Death was in their wrinkled eyes.
At their tables—with their maps,
Plans and calculations—wise
They all seemed; for well they knew
How ungrudgingly Youth dies.

At their green official baize
They debated all the night
Plans for your adventurous days
Which you followed with delight,
Youth in all your wanderings,
David of a thousand slings.

SUICIDE IN THE TRENCHES

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.

In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.

. . . . . .

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.

II

THE WAR-GOD WAKES

THE WAKENED GOD

MARGARET WIDDEMER

The War-god wakened drowsily;
  There were gold chains about his hands.
  He said: "And who shall reap my lands
And bear the tithes to Death for me?

"The nations stilled my thunderings;
  They wearied of my steel despair,
  The flames from out my burning hair:
Is there an ending of such things?"

Low laughed the Earth, and answered: "When
  Was any changeless law I gave
  Changed by my sons intent to save,
By puny pitying hands of men?

"I feel no ruth for some I bear. . . .
  The swarming, hungering overflow
  Of crowded millions, doomed to go,
They must destroy who chained you there.

"For some bright stone or shining praise
  They stint a million bodies' breath,
  And sell the women, shamed, to death,
And send the men brief length of days.

"They kill the bodies swift for me,
  And kill the souls you gave to peace. . . .
  You were more merciful than these,
Old master of my cruelty.

"Lo, souls are scarred and virtues dim:
  Take back thy scourge of ministry,
  Rise from thy silence suddenly,
Lest these still take Death's toll to him!"

The War-god snapped his golden chain:
His mercies thundered down the world,
And lashing battle-lines uncurled
And scourged the crouching lands again.

THE LIGHT-BRINGER

Witter Bynner

This is a time of death and blinded pain,
And men, as if half-slain
Stare at delirium
With empty eyes
And can no longer tell how patient come
Into the skies
The counselling stars.

These be my weapons in the flight:
The invincible nights and days
(My bright flag signalling their points and rays)
And the one proud, profoundest gun,
The unassailable light
Of the sun!

O my own people!—if we dare to be
Humanity,
If our preparedness be first within,
If we be resolute to sever
The heart of courage from the heart of fear—
Then we shall hear
Above the din,
The only trump of victory,
Not for the day, not for the year,
But forever.

FIGHT [1]

Percy Mackaye

Oh, out of void and old oblivion
And reptile slime first rose Apollo's head;
And God in likeness of Himself, 'tis said,
Created such an one,

[1] Abridged.

Now shaping Shakespeare's forehead, now Napoleon,
Various, by infinite invention bred,
In His own image moulding beautiful
The human skull.

Jock lifts his head; Macdonough sights his gun
To fire—but in his face a ball of flesh,
A whizzing clod, has hurled him in a mesh
Of tangled rope and tun,
While still about the deck the lubber clod is spun
And, bouncing from the rail, lies in a plesh
Of oozing blood, upstaring eyeless, red—
A gunner's head. . . .

Above the ships, enormous from the lake,
Rises a wraith—a phantom dim and gory,
Lifting her wondrous limbs of smoke and glory;
And little children quake
And lordly nations bow their foreheads for her sake,
And bards proclaim her in their fiery story;
And in her phantom breast, heartless unheeding,
Hearts—hearts are bleeding.

Macdonough lies with Downie in one land.
Victor and vanquished long ago were peers.
Held in the grip of peace a hundred years,
England has laid her hand
In ours, and we have held (and still shall hold) the band
That makes us brothers of the hemispheres;
Yea, still shall keep the lasting brotherhood
Of law and blood.

Yet one whose terror racked us long of yore
Still wreaks upon the world her lawless might;
Out of the deeps again the phantom Fight
Looms on her wings of War,
Sowing in armed camps and fields her venomed spore,
Embattling monarch's whim against man's right,
Trampling with iron hoofs the blooms of time
Back in the slime.

We, who from dreams of justice, dearly wrought,
First rose in the eyes of patient Washington,
And through the molten heart of Lincoln won
To liberty forgot,

Now, standing lone in peace, 'mid titans strange distraught,
Pray much for patience, more—God's will be done!—
For vision and for power nobly to see
The world made free.

WAR

George Sterling

The night was on the world, and in my sleep
I heard a voice that cried across the dark:
"Give steel!" And gazing I beheld a red,
Infernal stithy. There were Titans five
Assembled, thewed and naked and malign
Against the glare. One to the furnace throat,
Whence issued screams, fed shapes of human use—
The hammer, axe and plow. Those molten soon,
Another haled the dazzling ingot forth
With tongs, and gave it to the anvil. Two,
With massy sledges throbbing at the task,
Harried the gloom with unenduring stars
And poured a clangorous music on the dark,
With loud, astounding shock and counter-shock
Incessant. And the fifth colossus stood
The captain of that labor. From his form
Spread wings more black than Hell's high-altar—ribbed
As are the vampire-bat's. The night grew old,
And then was I aware they shaped a sword. . . .

In that domain and interval of dream
'Twas dawn upon the headlands of the world,
And I, appalled, beheld how men had reared
A mountain, dark below the morning star—
A peak made up of horses and of herds,
Of cradles, yokes and all the handiwork
Of man. Upon its crest were gems and gold,
Rare fabrics, and the woof of humble looms.
Harvests and groves and battlements were made
Part of its ramparts, and the whole was drenched
With oil and wine and honey. Then thereon
Men bound their sons, the fair, alert and strong,
Sparing no household. And when all were bound,
Brands were brought forth: the mount became a pyre.

Black from that red immensity of flame,
A tower of smoke, upcoiling to the sky,
Was shaped by the winds, and took the form
Of him who in the stithy gave command.
A shadow between day and men he stood;
His eyes looked forth on nothingness; his wings
Domed desolations, and the scarlet sun
Glowed through their darkness like a seal that God
Might set on Hell forever. Then the pyre shrank
And he reeled. Whereat, to save that shape
Their madness had evoked in death and pain,
Men rose and made a second sacrifice.

HARVEST-MOON

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

Over the twilight field,
The overflowing field,—
Over the glimmering field,
And bleeding furrows with their sodden yield
Of sheaves that still did writhe,
After the scythe;
The teeming field and darkly overstrewn
With all the garnered fullness of that noon—
Two looked upon each other.
One was a Woman men had called their mother;
And one, the Harvest-Moon.

And one, the Harvest-Moon,
Who stood, who gazed
On those unquiet gleanings where they bled;
Till the lone Woman said:

"But we were crazed. . . .
We should laugh now together, I and you,
We two.
You, for your ever dreaming it was worth
A star's while to look on and light the Earth;
And I, forever telling to my mind,
Glory it was, and gladness, to give birth
To humankind!
Yes, I, that ever thought it not amiss

To give the breath to men,
For men to slay again;
Lording it over anguish but to give
My life, that men might live
For this.
You will be laughing now, remembering
I called you once Dead World, and barren thing,
Yes, so we named you then,
You, far more wise
Than to give life to men!"

Over the field, that there
Gave back the skies
A scattered upward stare
From blank white eyes,—
The furrowed field that lay
Striving awhile, through many a bleeding dune
Of throbbing clay, but dumb and quiet soon,
She looked; and went her way—
The Harvest-Moon.

THE SKEIN OF GRIEVOUS WAR [1]

LAURA BELL EVERETT

War calls and drowns the kind command
Of Peace to plow, to plant the trees,
Press back the marge of desert land
And widen out its oases.

Home vainly begs its brave to stay;
Can they be needed more afar?
The bugles sound; in armed array
They wind the skein of grievous war.
The cities need their brave to clear
The spots with foulness overgrown,
And call for those who know not fear
To work where only fear is known.

The art of living we would know;
The arts of death our souls abhor.
Stay, men, but even now they go
To weave the web of woeful war.

[1] Translated from the "Iliad" xiv. 86.

SLEEP-WALKERS

E. Merrill Root

Black Congo and red Amritsar,
The death-fruit of the lynching-tree,
The islands where America
Gave water-cure for Liberty. . . .
All these we see—and do not see.

Father forgive us! for we know
Ignorantly the things we do.
To our poor vision fire is snow.
When life's volcanoes seethe and spew,
We see them as—a pretty view.

Blue hundreds clubbing strikers down,
Or khaki hundreds shooting them. . . .
War's great guns smashing flesh and town
(Guns forged of steel from Bethlehem!). . . .
Christ with a bayonet-diadem. . . .

All these are round us, and yet we
Are like men crazed in the Black Hole,
Who 'mid death's choke and trample see
Lambs . . . and white daisies on a knoll. . . .
Twinkle of trees—in the Black Hole!

The Red Sea and Dead Sea of war
That rolls old skulls within its swell
And surf of blood—it is not far:
Toward it we march as in a spell—
Blind men goose-stepping into hell.

Sightless and staring, toward the Pit
Like men who walk in sleep we go;
Nor all the blare and flare of it—
Fountains of lightning—iron snow—
Can wake us: to the damned we go.

Tragedy comes when men choose evil:
How name this monstrous miracle—
Poor blind men blundering to the Devil—
Somnambulists who wake in Hell?

MILITARISM

Derrick Norman Lehmer

Like molten lava down the mountain steep
I poured my myriad armies on their land;
I reaped their fertile fields with flaming brand;
I trod their cities to a smoking heap.
Bleating before me like a flock of sheep
Harried by wolves, a timid wailing band,
I drove their villagers with iron hand;
Laughed at their tears, laughed at their curses deep.

And now defeated, desolate I stand
Lone in the desert. All about me sweep
The ghostly winds. My place is in the sun—
But where are all my armies? Soon the sand
Will sink me in oblivion. I shall sleep
With Nineveh, with Tyre and Babylon.

WHEN THE CANNON BOOMS

William Herbert Carruth

When the cannon booms,
  When the war-drums rattle fiercely
And the feet of men in khaki hammer time out on the pave,
  It is easy to be brave;
It is easy to believe that God is angry with the other Man, our brother,
And has left the sword of Gideon in our wayward human hand,
  When the cannon booms.

When the cannon booms,
When the primal love of fighting stirs the tiger in our blood,
  And the fascinating smell
  Of the sulphur-fumes of hell
Rouses memories of the pit from which our human nature rose,

It is easy to forget
God was not found in the earthquake, in the strong wind or the fire;

It is easy to forget how at last the prophet heard Him
As a still, small voice,
When the cannon booms.

When the cannon booms,
When the war-lords strut and swagger
And the battle-ships are plowing for the bitter crop of death,
While the shouting rends the ear,
Echoing from the empyrean,
It is difficult to hear
Through the din the Galilæan
With His calm voice preaching peace on earth to men;
'Twill be easier to claim,
If we will, the Christian name,
To become as little children and be men of gentle will,
When the cannon booms—the cannon booms—*no more!*

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

JOHN OXENHAM

The World is in the Valley of Decision;
It is standing at the parting of the ways;
Will it climb the steps of God to realm elysian,—
Or fall on horror of still darker days?

Will it free itself of every shameful shackle?
Will it claim the glorious freedom of the brave?
Will it lose the soul of Life in this debacle,
And sink into a mean dishonored grave?

All the world is in the Valley of Decision,
And out of it there is but one sure road;
Eyes unsealed can still foresee the mighty vision
Of a world in travail turning unto God.

All the world is in the Valley of Decision.
Who shall dare its future destiny foretell?
Will it yield its soul unto the Heavenly Vision,
Or sink despairing into its own hell?

THE WATCHER AT THE GATE

S. H. M. Byers

Hark—from yonder East there come
Muttering sounds not heard before;
Sounds akin to muffled drum,
Sounds like waves upon the shore;
In whatever land it be
Where the red-cap fez is worn,
Where the Islam flag you see,
There are clouds at night and morn.

In the hills of India, where
Ghandi's silent armies wait,
Where the Chinese battling are,
See the signs of coming fate.
For a thousand years behold
Westward, westward was the race;
Now the tides have backward rolled,
East and West are face to face.

What to do? The clouds are near,
Cries the watcher at the gate;
Ships we have and armies here—
Trust we so to them our fate?
Heavens, no! The world has tried
Blood and war a thousand years.
Millions, myriads have died,
Worlds were washed with woman's tears.

Anguish all. Is it not time
We, who call ourselves so great,
Call to every land and clime
Offering Love instead of Hate?
They will listen, they will see,
War's dread banners will be furled,
And the people's watchword be—
Love alone can save the world.

TRAFFIC WARNING

Richard Warner Borst

I saw the wreck a little after it happened:
A car lay up-side-down beside the pavement;

The crowd stood by and gaped upon a drop
Of blood—the sickening symbol of a death,
A limp, white body quickly lifted, thrust
Into an ambulance and hurried graveward.

It came to me, then, with a sudden pang,
That what is so appalling as this wreck,
In war is but the usual run of things:
There is no brooding on one drop of blood
When the red streams flow darkly from the veins
Of millions sprawling, ghastly, still forever.

O you who hold the wheels that guide the nations,
Drive carefully—for perilous is the highway!

BATTLESHIPS

LORI PETRI

They rock and ride like great grey gulls
Upon the waters of the world,
Within their sullen, stately hulls
The dreams and toil of ages furled.
For men have cowed the stubborn earth,
Made sun and stars their truths reveal,
To bring to fearful, floating birth
These savages of smoking steel.
They lead the craft of life, they stream
Triumphant on the tides of time,—
While through their armored glories gleam
The black lusts of the primal slime.

WAR DISPLAY

EDMUND VANCE COOKE

This is the song of the thousand who are multiplied by twelve,
Sorted and sifted, tested and tried, and muscled to dig and delve.
They come from the hum of city and shop, they come from the farm and the field,
And they plow the acres of ocean now, but tell me, what is their yield?

This is the song of the sixteen ships to buffet the battle and gale,
And in every one we have thrown away a Harvard or a Yale.
Behold here the powers of Pittsburg, the mills of Lowell and Lynn,
And the furnaces roar and the boilers seethe, but tell me, what do they spin?

This is the song of the long, long miles from Hampton to the Horn,
From the Horn away to the western bay whence our guns are proudly borne.
A flying fleet and a host of hands to carry these rounds of shot!
And behold they have girdled the globe by half, and what is the gain they have brought?

This is the song of the waters, ay! defenders, if you please,
Defenders against our fellows, with their wasters even as these,
For we stumble still at the lesson taught since ever the years were young,
That the chief defense of a nation is to guard its own hand and tongue.

This is the song of our sinning (for the fault is not theirs but ours)
That we chain these slaves to our galley-ships as the symbol of our powers;
That we clap applause, that we cry hurrahs, that we vent our unthinking breath,
For oh, we are proud that we flaunt this flesh in the markets of dismal death!

THE BONFIRE

ROBERT FROST

"Oh, let's go up the hill and scare ourselves,
As reckless as the best of them to-night,
By setting fire to all the brush we piled
With pitchy hands to wait for rain or snow.
Oh, let's not wait for rain to make it safe.
The pile is ours: we dragged it bough on bough
Down dark converging paths between the pines.
Let's not care what we do with it to-night.
Divide it? No! But burn it as one pile
The way we piled it. And let's be the talk

Of people brought to windows by a light
Thrown from somewhere against their wallpaper.
Rouse them all, both the free and not so free
With saying what they'd like to do to us
For what they'd better wait till we have done.
Let's all but bring to life this old volcano,
If that is what the mountain ever was—
And scare ourselves. Let wild fire loose we will . . ."
"And scare you too?" the children said together.

"Why wouldn't it scare me to have a fire
Begin in smudge with ropy smoke and know
That still, if I repent, I may recall it,
But in a moment not: a little spurt
Of burning fatness, and then nothing but
The fire itself can put it out, and that
By burning out, and before it burns out
It will have roared first and mixed sparks with stars,
And sweeping round it with a flaming sword,
Made the dim trees stand back in wider circle—
Done so much and I know not how much more
I mean it shall not do if I can bind it.
Well if it doesn't with its draft bring on
A wind to blow in earnest from some quarter,
As once it did with me upon an April.
The breezes were so spent with winter blowing
They seemed to fail the bluebirds under them
Short of the perch their languid flight was toward;
And my flame made a pinnacle to heaven
As I walked once round it in possession.
But the wind out of doors—you know the saying.
There came a gust. You used to think the trees
Made wind by fanning since you never knew
It blow but that you saw the trees in motion.
Something or someone watching made that gust.
It put that flame tip-down and dabbed the grass
Of over-winter with the least tip-touch
Your tongue gives salt or sugar in your hand.
The place it reached to blackened instantly.
The black was all there was by day-light,
That and the merest curl of cigarette smoke—
And a flame slender as the hepaticas,
Blood-root, and violets so soon to be now.

But the black spread like black death on the ground,
And I think the sky darkened with a cloud
Like winter and evening coming on together.
There were enough things to be thought of then.
Where the field stretches toward the north
And setting sun to Hyla brook, I gave it
To flames without twice thinking, where it verges
Upon the road, to flames too, though in fear
They might find fuel there, in withered brake,
Grass its full length, old silver golden-rod,
And alder and grape vine entanglement,
To leap the dusty deadline. For my own
I took what front there was beside. I knelt
And thrust hands in and held my face away.
Fight such a fire by rubbing not by beating.
A board is the best weapon if you have it.
I had my coat. And oh, I knew, I knew,
And said out loud, I couldn't bide the smother
And heat so close in; but the thought of all
The woods and town on fire by me, and all
The town turned out to fight for me—that held me.
I trusted the brook barrier, but feared
The road would fail; and on that side the fire
Died not without a noise of crackling wood—
Of something more than tinder-grass and weed—
That brought me to my feet to hold it back
By leaning back myself, as if the reins
Were round my neck and I was at the plough.
I won! But I'm sure no one ever spread
Another color over a tenth the space
That I spread coal-black over in the time
It took me. Neighbors coming home from town
Couldn't believe so much black had come there
While they had their backs turned, that it hadn't been there
When they had passed an hour or so before
Going the other way and they not seen it.
They looked about for someone to have done it.
But there was no one. I was somewhere wondering
Where all my weariness had gone and why
I walked so light on air in heavy shoes
In spite of a scorched Fourth-of-July feeling.
Why wouldn't I be scared of remembering that?"

"If it scares you, what will it do to us?"

"Scare you. But if you shrink from being scared,
What would you say to war if it should come?
That's what for reasons I should like to know—
If you can comfort me by any answer."

"Oh, but war's not for children—it's for men."

"Now we are digging almost down to China.
My dears, my dears, you thought that—we all thought it.
So your mistake was ours. Haven't you heard, though,
About the ships where war has found them out
At sea, about the towns where war has come
Through opening clouds at night with droning speed
Further o'erhead than all but stars and angels,—
And children in the ships and in the towns?
Haven't you heard what we have lived to learn?
Nothing so new—something we had forgotten:
War is for everyone, for children too.
I wasn't going to tell you and I mustn't,
The best way is to come up hill with me
And have our fire and laugh and be afraid."

I SING THE BATTLE

HARRY KEMP

I sing the song of the great clean guns that belch forth death at will.
Ah, but the wailing mothers, the lifeless forms and still!

I sing the songs of the billowing flags, the bugles that cry before.
Ah, but the skeletons flapping rags, the lips that speak no more!

I sing the clash of bayonets and sabres that flash and cleave.
And wilt thou sing the maimed ones, too, that go with pinned-up sleeve?

I sing the acclaimed generals that bring the victory home.
Ah, but the broken bodies that drip like honey-comb!

I sing of hearts triumphant, long ranks of marching men.
And wilt thou sing the shadowy hosts that never march again?

BIRDS OF PREY MARCH

RUDYARD KIPLING

March! The mud is cakin' good about our trousies.
Front!—eyes front, an' watch the Colour-casin's drip.
Front! The faces of the women in the 'ouses
Ain't the kind o' things to take aboard the ship.

Cheer! An' we'll never march to victory.
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!
The Large Birds o' Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

Wheel! Oh, keep your touch; we're goin' round a corner.
Time!—mark time, an' let the men be'ind us close.
Lord! the transport's full, an' 'alf our lot not on 'er.
Cheer, O cheer! We're going off where no one knows.

March! The Devil's none so black as 'e is painted!
Cheer! We'll 'ave some fun before we're put away.
'Alt an' 'and 'er out—a woman's gone and fainted!
Cheer! Get on—Gawd 'elp the married men today!

Hoi! Come up, you 'ungry beggars, to yer sorrow.
('Ear them say they want their tea, an' want it quick!)
You won't have no mind for slingers, not tomorrow—
No; you'll put the 'tween-decks stove out, bein' sick!

'Alt! The married kit 'as all to go before us!
'Course it's blocked the bloomin' gangway up again!
Cheer, O cheer the 'Orse Guards watchin' tender o'er us,
Keepin' us since eight this mornin' in the rain!

Stuck in 'eavy marchin'-order, sopped and wringin'—
Sick, before our time to watch 'er 'eave an' fall,
'Ere's your 'appy 'ome at last, an' stop your singin'.
'Alt! Fall in along the troop-deck! Silence all!

Cheer! For we'll never live to see no bloomin' victory!
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar! (One cheer more!)
The jackal and the kite
'Ave an 'ealthy appetite,

An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip! Uproar!)
The eagle and the crow
They are waitin' ever so,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip! Uproar!
Yes, the Large Birds of Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

PATRIOTISM

RAYMOND KRESENSKY

It's all you need to do
Is take off your hat when the flag goes by—
Just take off your hat when the flag goes by.
If it's a stiff hat lay it gracefully across your chest
And look earnest, and look sincere.

It's all you need to do
Is to wave your handkerchief and shout
When a general of the army passes by.
And it's all you need to do is put out a flag.
It's all you need to do
Is take off your hat when the flag goes by.

And fly a flag. Hurrah! Hurrah!
That's patriotism.
And see that everyone else, yes, everyone else
Does just what you do
Or else he's not patriotic.

If you don't vote, no one cares.
If you've never read the Constitution, no one cares.
If you bootleg, no one cares.
If you deprive others of that so-called life and liberty
Nobody cares at all.
All you need to do is take off your hat when the flag goes by.

Push your propaganda for war
When you're a manufacturer of dynamite and poison gas,
Corned beef and paper shoes.
Forget the soldiers of other wars
And steal their pensions. Forget them.

But for the sake of your country
Take off your hat when the flag goes by,
Take off your hat when the flag goes by.
That's patriotism.

A PATRIOT I!

JEAN LEWIS MORRIS

A patriot I! This is my cry:
  Build large each battleship!
Arm a million men! The world defy!
Let darting planes fill the sky
  And lesser peoples feel our grip.

My country has right, by warlike might
  The nations of the world
To plunge in nervous fright,
Preparing for the fight
  Before war's declaration's hurled.

I'm a red-blooded American
Who never from battle ran,
  Not a pacifist or saintly faker.
. . . . .
You've guessed me right,
I'm in every fight! . . .
  I'm a munition maker.

TO A NINE-INCH GUN [1]

ANONYMOUS

Whether your shell hits the target or not,
Your cost is Five Hundred Dollars a Shot.
You thing of noise and flame and power,
We feed you a hundred barrels of flour
Each time you roar. Your flame is fed
With twenty thousand loaves of bread.
Silence! A million hungry men
Seek bread to fill their mouths again.

[1] This poem came to the New York World office on a crumpled piece of soiled paper. The author's address was given as Fourth Bench, City Hall Park.

KRUPPISM

PERCY MACKAYE

Crowned on the twilight battlefield, there bends
A crooked iron dwarf, and delves for gold,
Chuckling: "One hundred thousand gatlings—sold!"
And the moon rises, and a moaning rends
The mangled living, and the dead distends,
And a child cowers on the chartless wold,
Where, searching in his safety vault of mold,
The kobold kaiser cuts his dividends.

We, who still wage his battles, are his thralls,
And dying do him homage; yea, and give
Daily our living souls to be enticed
Into his power. So long as on war's walls
We build engines of death that he may live,
So long shall we serve Krupp instead of Christ.

THE RIFLE

COVINGTON HALL

'Tis made of hard, death-tempered steel,
This "right" of those that never feel;
It gleams before their altars cold,
The menace of the gods of gold.

It hisses to the slave, "Be still!"
Or wreaks assassination's will;
It bears upon its blighting breath
The message of the lords of death.

In shadowed mine and silent wood,
It stills the voice of brotherhood;
It stains with grief the mother-face;
It murders hope; it starves the race.

It frightens girlhood down the night
Where glows the baleful crimson light;
It binds the chains on baby slaves,
This death-tool in the hands of knaves.

Listen, O My Masters!

Hear me, ye who "shoot to kill,"
It may not always wreak your will!
Beware! Beware its rebel shriek—
The message men to tyrants speak!

WAR!

ANONYMOUS

War—a dirty, loathesome, servile murder-job;
Men lousy, sleepless, ulcerous, afraid;
Men stunned to brainlessness and gibberings;
Men maimed and blind; men against machines;
Flesh versus iron, concrete, flame and wire;
Men choking out their souls in poison gas;
Men squelched into the slime by tramping feet;
Dead bodies used to build a trench again;
Men disemboweled by guns five miles away,
Cursing with their last breath the living God
Because he made them in his image.

WHO MADE WAR?

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

God, who made the shining stars,
The circling planets, the fair, green earth,
With friendly seasons—jubilant spring,
Bountiful summer, winter that puts tired life to rest;
God, who made morning songs and sweet night crooning;
God of the forests and silver rivers,
Gardens and orchards green and golden,
God of harmony, God of beauty,
Who made war?

WHENCE COMETH WAR

ROBERT WHITAKER

Whence cometh war?
Bring the foul thing to bar.

Out of the hatreds of the ages long;
Out of the greed and blood-lust of the strong;
Out of the strutting swagger of the proud;
Out of the mad hysterias of the crowd;
Out of the lying honor of the State;
Out of the coward meanness of the great;
Out of the toll that profit takes from toil,
Of surplus spoil, piled up on surplus spoil,
Choking to idleness the workman's wheel,
Or raping all the earth with ruthless steel;
Out of a devil's smoke-screen of defense,
That turns to foolishness the things of sense,
Makes virtue's garden a vast swamp of vice,
And sells the Son of Man at Judas' price,
Nor has the grace to cast away the pelf
But makes of God an infidel himself.

Whence cometh war? we know the truth too well-
Out of the mouth of hell!

THE HELL-GOD

Louise Morgan Sill

I am the Hell-god, War!
When I go forth from the dim caves of Hell
I mask, that none may know me, and I wear
A brow of Honour, with deep eyes of Faith,
A mouth of Valour, and a Patriot's smile.
Thus go I forth, the Hell-god, War.

But deeper writhe the serpents in their pits
As though with silent laughter, and the spears
Of new-roused demons flicker in the gloom.

I travel to my place, and lo, the mask
Falls from me, and men see me as I am—
Then in my blood boils the demoniac rage
Of my true being. Men who dare my power—
Though they be what their fellows deem the highest
Of all earth's children, though they be as fair
As were their mothers, though they be as loved
As angels in high Heaven, yet I dash them,

Puppets, to earth, and grind their horrorful eyes
Into the mud with my twice-cloven heel.
Women I soil, and torture with such deeds
As men with horrid mouthings dare not name.
Old men I strangle, and old women—faugh!
Into the ditch they fall to smother there
Beneath dead horses, or dead men, or what
Of death is chancing by. Their homes I burn;
Their guerdon—many a hungry day was spent,
Toil-sweating days, to hoard those foolish coins—
I take them, as I laugh and laugh again.
And when there's death enough, I call my friends
The vultures, and they make a merry feast.

Then on I go into the homes of these,
The dead pawns of my game, and in the hearts
Of fathers, mothers, children, aye, and wives—
Deep, deep in wives—I drive the blood-red swords
The dead men fought with—not to give them death,
But fill their veins with agony, alive.
Some weep, some moan, some sink in hopeless woe,
Old heads bow low, and younger heads turn grey.
The game is rich and fiery—it passes,
But this long aftermath of gaunt despair
Yields me good profit, fills my heart with joy,
My mouth with laughter. Ho, oho, oho!
I am the Hell-god, War!

Then I go home to Hell, wherein one night,
One murky, sullen night, I was engendered,
My father the Arch-fiend, and my dark mother
As foul a witch as ever murdered souls.
They taught me from my birth this game of War,
A pretty game, that set my temper hot
And stormed my sense with blood-lust. Many cycles
Have passed while men have striven hard to check
My noble play, and evermore have failed.
The nether gods are with me, and their power
Works for my ends. For what could be more worthy
Of godly sport than this same game of War?
What finer deed than murder? What more great
Than swift destruction of a humble home,
Crushing of hope, starving of fighting men,
The maiming of the strong, or sudden, strange,

And horrible disappearance of a man
Blown into formless atoms? What more rare
Than mothers felled and bound, that I may feed
Their butchered children to them—as they eat
Their reason bursts and goes. Oh, 'tis a game
Only the nether gods can look upon
And smile, for theirs must be a rough-hewn sport.

And when my little pawns, men, prate of peace
I laugh, and all my demons laugh again,
For well we know their weakness, well we know
Their greed, their egotism and their fear—
Fear of the little pawns—that other men
May call them coward: one of the many fears
Of the fearful little pawns. Oh how we laugh!
How wide the murmur ripples through all Hell,
Through blackened arches, gloomy gates and caves!
From fiend to fiend, from pit to lower pit,
That cackling laughter in the glimmering light
Echoes for ever, pleasing to my ears,
Warming the bloody currents of my veins—
I am the Hell-god, War!

THE CRIMINALITY OF WAR

E. Young

One to destroy is murder by the law;
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe;
To murder thousands takes a specious name,
War's glorious art, and gives immortal fame.

THE STARS' ACCUSAL

John Oxenham

How can the makers of unrighteous wars
Stand the accusal of the watchful stars?

To stand—
A dust-speck, facing the infinitudes
Of Thine unfathomable dome, a night like this,—
To stand full-face to Thy High Majesties,—
Thy myriad worlds in solemn watchfulness,—

Watching, watching, watching all below,
And man in all his wilfulness for woe!
Dear Lord, one wonders that Thou bearest still
With man on whom Thou didst such grace bestow,
And with his wilful faculty for woe!

Those sleepless sentinels! They may be worlds
All peopled like our own. But, as I stand,
They are to me the myriad eyes of God,—
Watching, watching, watching all below,
And man in all his wilfulness for woe!

And then—to think
What those same piercing eyes look down upon
Elsewhere on this fair earth that Thou hast made!—
Watching, watching, watching all below,
And man in all his wilfulness for woe!

—On all the desolations he hath wrought,
—On all the passionate hatreds he hath taught,
—On all Thy great hopes he hath brought to nought;—
—Man rending man with ruthless bitterness,
—Blasting Thine image into nothingness,
—Hounding Thy innocents to awful deaths,
And worse than deaths! Happy the dead, who sped
Before the torturers their lust had fed!
—On Thy Christ crucified afresh each day,
—On all the horrors of War's grim red way.
And ever, in Thy solemn midnight skies,
Those myriad, sleepless, vast accusing eyes,—
Watching, watching, watching all below,
And man in all his wilfulness for woe!

Dear Lord!—
When in our troubled hearts we ponder this,
We can but wonder at Thy wrath delayed,—
We can but wonder that Thy hand is stayed,—
We can but wonder at Thy sufferance
Of man, whom Thou in Thine own image made,
When he that image doth so sore degrade!
If Thou shouldst blot us out without a word,
Our stricken souls must say we had incurred
Just punishment.
Warnings we lacked not, warnings oft and clear,
But in our arrogance we gave no ear
To Thine admonishment.

And yet—and yet! O Lord, we humbly pray,—
Put back again Thy righteous Judgment Day!
Have patience with us yet a while, until
Through these our sufferings we learn Thy will.

WAR

JOSEPH, A FAMOUS INDIAN CHIEF

Hear me, my warriors; my heart is sick and sad;
Our chiefs are killed,
The old men are all dead,
It is cold and we have no blankets;
The little children are freezing to death.
Hear me, my warriors; my heart is sick and sad;
From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever!

PREPARE

WITTER BYNNER

O human hearts,
  Beating through fear, through jealousy,
  Through pride, through avarice, through bitterness,
Through agony, through death.
  Beating, beating,
  Shame and forgiveness,
  Bewilderment and love,
O my own country,
  My new world,
  Prepare,
  Prepare—
Not to avenge wrong
But to exalt right,
Not to display honor
But to prove humility,
Not to bring wrath
  But vision,
Not to win war
  But a people,
And not people only,
But all peoples,
Not to exact justice from your enemies only
  But from your friends,
And not from your friends only
  But from yourselves!

III

THE TRENCHES

DREAMERS

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Soldiers are citizens of death's grey land,
Drawing no dividend from time's tomorrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longings to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

IN THE TRENCHES

RICHARD ALDINGTON

Not that we are weary,
Not that we fear,
Not that we are lonely
Though never alone—
Not these, not these destroy us;
But that each rush and crash
Of mortar and shell,
Each cruel bitter shriek of bullet
That tears the wind like a blade,
Each wound on the breast of earth,
Of Demeter, our Mother,
Wound us also,
Sever and rend the fine fabric
Of the wings of our frail souls,
Scatter into dust the bright wings
Of Psyche!

II

Impotent,
How impotent is all this clamor,
This destruction and contest . . .
Night after night comes the moon
Haughty and perfect;
Night after night the Pleiades sing
And Orion swings his belt across the sky.
Night after night the frost
Crumbles the hard earth.

Soon the spring will drop flowers
And patient creeping stalk and leaf
Along these barren lines
Where the huge rats scuttle
And the hawk shrieks to the carrion crow.

Can you stay them with your noise?
Then kill winter with your cannon,
Hold back Orion with your bayonets
And crush the spring leaf with your armies!

THE TRENCHES

FREDERIC MANNING

Endless lanes, sunken in the clay,
Bays, and traverses, fringed with wasted herbiage,
Seed-pods of blue scabious, and some lingering blooms;
And the sky, seen as from a well,
Brilliant with frosty stars.
We stumble, cursing, on the slippery duck-boards.
Goaded like the damned by some invisible wrath,
A will stronger than weariness, stronger than animal fear,
Implacable and monotonous.

Here a shaft, slanting, and below
A dusty and flickering light from one feeble candle
And prone figures sleeping uneasily,
Murmuring,
And men who cannot sleep,

With faces impassive as masks,
Bright, feverish eyes, and drawn lips,
Sad, pitiless, terrible faces,
Each an incarnate curse.

Here in a bay, a helmeted sentry
Silent and motionless, watching while two sleep,
And he sees before him
With indifferent eyes the blasted and torn land
Peopled with stiff prone forms, stupidly rigid,
As tho' they had not been men.

Dead are the lips where love laughed or sang,
The hands of youth eager to lay hold of life,
Eyes that have laughed to eyes,
And these were begotten,
O Love, and lived lightly, and burnt
With the lust of a man's first strength: ere they were rent,
Almost at unawares, savagely; and strewn
In bloody fragments, to be the carrion
Of rats and crows.

And the sentry moves not, searching
Night for menace with weary eyes.

THE REDEEMER

Siegfried Sassoon

Darkness: the rain sluiced down; the mire was deep;
It was past twelve on a mid-winter night,
When peaceful folk in beds lay snug asleep;
There, with much work to do before the light,
We lugged our clay-sucked boots as best we might
Along the trench; sometimes a bullet sang,
And droning shells burst with a hollow bang;
We were soaked, chilled and wretched, every one.
Darkness: the distant wink of a huge gun.

I turned in the black ditch, loathing the storm;
A rocket fizzed, and burned with blanching flare,
And lit the face of what had been a form
Foundering in the mirk. He stood before me there:
I say that he was Christ; stiff in the glare,

And leaning forward from his burdening task,
Both arms supporting it; his eyes on mine
Stared from the woeful head that seemed a mask
Of mortal pain in Hell's unholy shrine.

No thorny crown, only a woolen cap
He wore—an English soldier, white and strong,
Who loved his time like any simple chap,
Good days of work and sport and homely song;
Now he has learned that nights are very long,
And dawn a watching of the windowed sky.
But to the end, unjudging, he'll endure
Horror and pain, not uncontent to die
That Lancaster on Lune may stand secure.

He faced me, reeling in his weariness,
Shouldering his load of planks, so hard to bear;
I say that he was Christ, who wrought to bless
All groping things with freedom bright as air,
And with His mercy washed and made them fair.
Then when the flame sank, and all grew black as pitch,
While we began to struggle along in the ditch;
And someone flung his burden in the muck,
Mumbling: "O Christ Almighty, now I'm stuck!"

PRAYER IN THE TRENCHES

What the Regimental Chaplain Prayed

BRENT DOW ALLINSON

Lord God of Hosts, be with us here!
Be with our troops that have no peer!
Sheathe them and shield them with Thy might,
Teach them to scorn comfort, delight,—
To die for Freedom we revere,
And homes inestimably dear!
Gird them with iron! . . . Be ever near,
Through stern and soul-redeeming night,
Lord God of Hosts!

When Christ to mortals did appear
He brought nor meek compliance nor fear,
He brought a sword,—bade men to fight;

We fight beside Him now and here—
Our holy Captain—without fear
For Peace and Liberty and Right,—
Lord God of Hosts!

DE PROFUNDIS

What the Regimental Chaplain Should Have Prayed

Cometh the dawn: ye men who know
Infinite anguish, infinite woe,—
Blinded and scourged in a ghastly doom,
Yearning and staggering through the gloom
Of filthy war,—O Youth laid low,
Dreaming of clean things long ago,
Of Christmas eves and drifted snow,
Cursing the savage cannon-boom,—
Cometh the dawn!

All things end sometime here below,
Even hate and war: it must be so. . . .
The rotting flesh, the riven gloom,
Will vanish with the dreaded foe,
And peace will come and May winds blow,
And thrushes sing where lilacs bloom:
Cometh the dawn!

TRENCH LINES: THE TIRED HEART

R. A. Vallance

It has come at last; we attack at morn:
And this is the end, for me.
Over my spirit to-night is borne
The calm decree.

I do not question: I do not moan:
And now that death's so near
My thoughts are fled to a plane unknown
To hope, or fear.

I'm thinking how sad it is, I'm wondering how,
Having been so inspired—
Having been so eager—my heart can now
Be so tired.

I'm thinking of Brooke, with all his store
Of golden music still'd:
Of Grenfell and Freston, and many more,
Killed, killed.

Men who were true, at the dawn of day—
True to the best they knew;
Proud to be up, and the first away,
When the whistles blew. . . .

I have lost my brother, I have lost my friends,
And my faith, and my youth, and my zest;
And found nothing; but when it ends
I shall find rest.

Oh, I can go under; I only ask,
May it be clean, and quick!
I have done my best at a poor task
And my heart is sick.

But let it be death, Lord, not maiming;
And silence when I fall:
Shatter this body beyond reclaiming,
Or not at all.

O, fear not, England! I shall be true:
The tired heart may shirk,
But the mind will teach the arm to do
Its devil's work.

And if it be hard, when the whistles blow,
To be true to the old school-song
It's only because in my heart I know
It's all, all wrong.

BEFORE ACTION

WILLIAM NOEL HODGSON

By all the glories of the day
And the cool evening's benison,
By that last sunset touch that lay
Upon the hills when day was done,

By beauty lavishly outpoured
And blessings carelessly received,
By all the days that I have lived
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all men's hopes and fears,
And all the wonders poets sing,
The laughter of unclouded years
And every sad and lovely thing,
By the romantic ages stored
With high endeavor that was his,
By all his mad catastrophes,
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill
Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of thy sunsets spill
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
Must say good-bye to all of this;—
By all delights that I shall miss,
Help me to die, O Lord.

SPRING OFFENSIVE

WILFRED OWEN

Halted against the shade of a last hill,
They fed, and, lying easy, were at ease
And, finding comfortable chests and knees
Carelessly slept. But many there stood still
To face the stark, blank sky beyond the ridge,
Knowing their feet had come to the end of the world.

Marvelling they stood, and watched the long grass swirled
By the May breeze, murmurous with wasp and midge,
For though the summer oozed into their veins
Like the injected drug for their bones' pains,
Sharp on their souls hung the imminent line of grass,
Fearfully flashed the sky's mysterious glass.

Hour after hour they ponder the warm field—
And the far valley behind, where the buttercups
Had blessed with gold their slow boots coming up,
Where even the little brambles would not yield,
But clutched and clung to them like sorrowing hands;
They breathe like trees unstirred.

Till like a cold gust thrilled the little word
At which each body and its soul begird
And tighten them for battle. No alarms
Of bugles, no high flags, no clamorous haste—
Only a lift and flare of eyes that faced
The sun, like a friend with whom their love is done.
O larger shone that smile against the sun,—
Mightier than his whose bounty these have spurned.

So, soon they topped the hill, and raced together
Over an open stretch of herb and heather
Exposed. And instantly the whole sky burned
With fury against them; and soft sudden cups
Opened in thousands for their blood; and the green slopes
Chasmed and steepened sheer to infinite space.

Of them who running on that last high place
Leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up
On the hot blast and fury of hell's upsurge,
Or plunged and fell away past this world's verge,
Some say God caught them even before they fell.

But what say such as from existence' brink
Ventured but drave too swift to sink.
The few who rushed in the body to enter hell,
And there out-fiending all its fiends and flames
With superhuman inhumanities,
Long-famous glories, immemorial shames—
And crawling slowly back, have by degrees
Regained cool peaceful air in wonder—
Why speak they not of comrades that went under?

ATTACK

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
In the wild purple of the glowering sun,
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.
The barrage roars and lifts. Then clumsily bowed
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to meet the bristling fire.
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,
They leave their trenches, going over the top,
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,
Flounders in mud. O Jesu, make it stop!

THE HERO OF VIMY

An Incident of the Great War

BRENT DOW ALLINSON

We charged at Vimy,—zero was at four;
Sore-eyed we rose and cursed the bleeding war,
And sick at heart, half paralyzed with fear,
Waited in mud and mist—it seemed a year—
Talking in whispers while we gulped the gin;
And John, our sergeant, looked scared-white and thin,
(This was his first trip over) as he said:
"I wish we'd go; one might as well be dead
As in this slaughter-pen. What fools we are!
What poor, damned fools!" . . .
A murmur from afar
Like wind through winter branches rose and fell
Along the line,—and up we went pell-mell,
Kicking the ladders backward in the mud,—
Crazy as loons, thirsting for German blood!

Then broke the storm like thunder on the plain!
The heavens roared—the shrapnel fell like rain;
Through the dun mist of dawn we groped and ran
In a long wave up that infernal hill,

Dodging black stumps and blacker pits until
I tripped on what had onetime been a man
And fell headlong with a torn and bleeding thigh—
Angry and helpless while the storm drove by;
Thinking of John and the children there I lay
And watched the sullen sky grow ashen gray . . .

They found him hanging dead upon the wire,—
Caught like a fly in a huge spider-net . . .
In a few days the Colonel came to inquire
If I were well, and how my leg was set:
"You should have seen the troops! God! They were splendid!"
"Was the wire cut?" I asked.
His laughter ended.
"By some mischance our barrage fell too high;
The boys got badly mangled as they came,"
He answered. "But our staff was not to blame."
"A pity that so many had to die
Through negligence!" I said, and turned my face.

"I shall report the matter to the base,"—
His quick retort. "It was a bloody shame;
But then, we'd men to spare and there's no blame
So far as we're concerned . . . Lord! how they died!"

He smiled and went. And as I saw him ride
Down that charred slope—his orderly abaft—
I cried to Heaven,—and wondered if God laughed!

HELL À LA MODE

VINCENT G. BURNS

Zero hour!
Advance!
The military Power
Decrees. . . .
Out from their trenches, mud-holes, trees,
The doughboys, trembling in a trance,
Knee-deep in mud
And blood,
Through dark like pitch
Pierced by stabs of flame,
Teeth-clenched and faces tense,
Move forward with that haunting sense

Of a horrible fear too wild to tame,
Fear like some mad shrieking witch
Driving them stumbling, staggering, stubbornly on—
On through the chaos and horrors of a million hells—
On through the shower of a million shells—
On, on through the dark and the mud and the thunder,
Thunder like one brazen wall of noise.
On, on, heels crunching out the brains of boys
As rank after rank goes under!
For before the hurtlings of that red-hot steel
Lines break like paper, bodies sway and reel,
Nothing can live on that bullet-swept plain,
Even tank or trench or tree is vain
To stand up against that iron rain,
(Rain for a crop grim Death will reap
When the scythe of War leaves its bloody heap. . . .)
Like trees struck by lightning human bodies fall;
And the killing continues as cruel as fate
Until nothing is left on the field at all,
Nothing—but mud and blood and wire,
And in the slough of that awful mire,
Fragments of sons that were slaughtered and slain,
And cries of their anguish in the hellish gloom,
Cries that sound like the Day of Doom,
Cries of beings gone mad with pain,
Cries of suffering and terrible hate,
Cries of a host's last gasping breath,
And over it all, at last, at last,
When the fearful fury of the battle is past,
The silence of wreckage and ruin and death!

THE ASSAULT

Robert Nichols

The beating of the guns grows louder.
"Not long, boys, now."
My heart burns whiter, fearfuller, prouder.
Hurricanes grow
As guns redouble their fire.
Through the shaken periscope peeping,
I glimpse their wire;
Black earth, fountains of earth rise, leaping,

Spouting like shocks of meeting waves.
Death's fountains are playing.
Shells like shrieking birds rush over;
Crash and din rises higher.
A stream of lead raves
Over us from the left . . . (we safe under cover!)
Crash! Reverberation! Crash!
Acrid smoke billowing. Flash upon flash.
Black smoke drifting. The German line
Vanishes in confusion, smoke. Cries, and cry
Of our men, *"Gah, yer swine!*
Ye're for it," die
In a hurricane of shell.

One cry:
"We're comin' soon! Look out!"
There is opened hell
Over there; fragments fly,
Rifles and bits of men whirled at the sky—
Dust, smoke, thunder! A sudden bout
Of machine guns chattering . . .
And a redoubled battering,
As if in fury at their daring! . . .

No good staring.

Time soon now . . . home . . . house on a sunny hill . . .
Gone like a flickered page:
Time soon now . . . zero [1] . . . will engage . . .

A sudden thrill—
"Fix bayonets!"
Gods! we have our fill
Of fear, hysteria, exultation, rage,
Rage to kill.
My heart burns hot, whiter and whiter,
Contracts tighter and tighter,
Until I stifle with the will
Long forged, now used
(Though utterly strained)
O pounding heart,
Baffled, confused,
Heart panged, head singing, dizzily pained—
To do my part.

[1] "Zero" is the hour agreed upon by the Staff when the infantry are to go "over the top" and make the assault.

Blindness a moment. Sick.
There the men are!
Bayonets ready: click!
Time goes quick:
A stumbled prayer . . . somehow a blazing star
In a blue night . . . where?
Again prayer.
The tongue trips. Start:
How's time? Soon now. Two minutes or less.
The gun's fury mounting higher . . .
Their utmost. I lift a silent hand. Unseen I bless
Those hearts will follow me.
And beautifully,
Now beautifully my will grips.
Soul calm and round and filmed and white!

A shout: "Men, no such order as retire."
I nod. The whistle's 'twixt my lips . . .
I catch
A wan, worn smile at me.
Dear men!
The pale wrist-watch . . .
The quiet hand ticks on amid the din.
The guns again
Rise to a last fury, to a rage, a lust:
Kill! Pound! Kill! Pound! Pound!
Now comes the thrust!
My part . . . dizziness . . . will . . . but trust
These men. The great guns rise;
Their fury seems to burst the earth and skies!

They lift.[1]

Gather, heart, all thoughts that drift;
Be steel, soul,
Compress thyself
Into a round bright whole.

I cannot speak.

Time! Time!

[1] Guns are said to "lift" when, after pounding the front line of the enemy, they lengthen their range and set up a barrier of fire beyond his front line to prevent supports moving up. The attacking infantry then advance.

I hear my whistle shriek,
Between teeth set;
I fling an arm up,
Scramble up the grime
Over the parapet!
I'm up. Go on.
Something meets us.
Heads down into the storm that greets us.
A wail.
Lights. Blurr.
Gone.
On, on. Lead. Lead. Hail.
Spatter! Whirr! Whirr!
"Toward that patch of brown;
Direction left."

Bullets a stream
Devouring thought crying in a dream.
Men, crumpling, going down . . .
Go on. Go.
Deafness. Numbness. The loudening tornado.
Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.
My voice's strangled shout:
"Steady pace, boys!"
The still light: gladness.
"Look, sir. Look out!"
Ha! Ha! Bunched figures waiting.
Revolver levelled quick!
Flick! Flick!
Red as blood.
Germans!
Good! O good!
Cool madness.

IT'S A QUEER TIME

ROBERT GRAVES [1]

It's hard to know if you're alive or dead
When steel and fire go roaring through your head.

One moment you'll be crouching at your gun
Traversing, mowing heaps down half in fun:

[1] Graves was in the World War with his noble comrades, Sassoon, Owen, and Nichols.

The next, you choke and clutch at your right breast—
No time to think—leave all—and . . . you go . . .
To Treasure Island where the Spice winds blow,
To lovely groves of mango, quince and lime—
Breathe no good-bye, but ho, for the Red West!
It's a queer time.

You're charging madly at them yelling "Fag!"
When somehow something gives and your feet drag.
You fall and strike your head; yet feel no pain
And find . . . you're digging tunnels through the hay
In the Big Barn, 'cause it's a rainy day.
Oh, springy hay, and lovely beams to climb!
You're back in the old sailor suit again.
It's a queer time.

Or you'll be dozing safe in your dug-out—
A great roar—the trench shakes and falls about—
You're struggling, gasping, struggling, then . . . *hullo!*
Elsie comes tripping gaily down the trench,
Hanky to nose—that lyddite makes a stench—
Getting her pinafore all over grime.
Funny! because she died ten years ago!
It's a queer time.

The trouble is, things happen much too quick;
Up jump the Boches, rifles thump and click,
You stagger, and the whole scene fades away:
Even good Christians don't like passing straight
From Tipperary or their Hymn of Hate
To Alleluiah-chanting, and the chime
Of golden harps . . . and . . . I'm not well to-day . . .
It's a queer time.

BETWEEN THE LINES

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

When consciousness came back, he found he lay
Between the opposing fires, but could not tell
On which hand were his friends; and either way
For him to turn was chancy—bullet and shell
Whistling and shrieking over him, as the glare
Of searchlights scoured the darkness to blind day.

He scrambled to his hands and knees ascare,
Dragging his wounded foot through puddled clay,
And tumbled in a hole a shell had scooped
At random in a turnip-field between
The unseen trenches where the foes lay cooped
Through that unending battle of unseen,
Dead-locked, league-stretching armies; and quite spent
He rolled upon his back within the pit,
And lay secure, thinking of all it meant—
His lying in that little hole, sore hit,
But living, while across the starry sky
Shrapnel and shell went screeching overhead—
Of all it meant that he, Tom Dodd, should lie
Among the Belgian turnips, while his bed . . .
If it were he, indeed, who'd climbed each night,
Fagged with the day's work, up the narrow stair,
And slipt his clothes off in the candle-light,
Too tired to fold them neatly in a chair
The way his mother'd taught him—too dog-tired
After the long day's serving in the shop,
Inquiring what each customer required,
Politely talking weather, fit to drop . . .

And now for fourteen days and nights, at least,
He hadn't had his clothes off, and had lain
In muddy trenches, napping like a beast
With one eye open, under sun and rain
And that unceasing hell-fire. . . .
It was strange
How things turned out—the chances! You'd just got
To take your luck in life, you couldn't change
Your luck.
And so here he was lying shot
Who just six months ago had thought to spend
His days behind a counter. Still, perhaps . . .
And now, God only knew how he would end!

He'd like to know how many of the chaps
Had won back to the trench alive, when he
Had fallen wounded and been left for dead,
If any! . . .
This was different, certainly,
From selling knots of tape and reels of thread
And knots of tape and reels of thread and knots
Of tape and reels of thread and knots of tape,

Day in, day out, and answering "Have you got" 's
And "Do you keep" 's till there seemed no escape
From everlasting serving in a shop,
Inquiring what each customer required,
Politely talking weather, fit to drop,
With swollen ankles, tired. . . .
But he was tired
Now. Every bone was aching, and had ached
For fourteen days and nights in that wet trench—
Just duller when he slept than when he waked—
Crouching for shelter from the steady drench
Of shell and shrapnel. . . .

That old trench, it seemed
Almost like home to him. He'd slept and fed
And sung and smoked in it, while shrapnel screamed
And shells went whining harmless overhead—
Harmless, at least, as far as he. . . .
But Dick—
Dick hadn't found them harmless yesterday,
At breakfast, when he'd said he couldn't stick
Eating dry bread, and crawled out the back way,
And brought them butter in a lordly dish—
Butter enough for all, and held it high,
Yellow and fresh and clean as you would wish—
When plump upon the plate from out the sky
A shell fell bursting. . . . Where the butter went,
God only knew! . . .
And Dick . . . He dared not think
Of what had come to Dick . . . or what it meant—
The shrieking and the whistling and the stink
He'd lived in fourteen days and nights. 'Twas luck
That he still lived. . . .
And queer how little then
He seemed to care that Dick . . . perhaps 'twas pluck
That hardened him—a man among the men—
Perhaps. . . . Yet, only think things out a bit,
And he was rabbit-livered, blue with funk!
And he'd liked Dick . . . and yet when Dick was hit,
He hadn't turned a hair. The meanest skunk
He should have thought would feel it when his mate
Was blown to smithereens—Dick, proud as punch,
Grinning like sin, and holding up the plate—
But he had gone on munching his dry hunch,

Unwinking, till he swallowed the last crumb.
Perhaps 'twas just because he dared not let
His mind run upon Dick, who'd been his chum.
He dared not now, though he could not forget.

Dick took his luck. And, life or death, 'twas luck
From first to last; and you'd just got to trust
Your luck and grin. It wasn't so much pluck
As knowing that you'd got to, when needs must,
And better to die grinning . . .

Quiet now
Had fallen on the night. On either hand
The guns were quiet. Cool upon his brow
The quiet darkness brooded, as he scanned
The starry sky. He'd never seen before
So many stars. Although, of course, he'd known
That there were stars, somehow before the war
He'd never realised them—so thick-sown,
Millions and millions. Serving in the shop,
Stars didn't count for much; and then at nights
Strolling the pavements, dull and fit to drop,
You didn't see much but the city lights.
He'd never in his life seen so much sky
As he'd seen this last fortnight. It was queer
The things war taught you. He'd a mind to try
To count the stars—they shone so bright and clear.

One, two, three, four . . . Ah, God, but he was tired . . .
Five, six, seven, eight . . .

Yes, it was number eight.
And what was the next thing that she required?
(Too bad of customers to come so late,
At closing time!) Again within the shop
He handled knots of tape and reels of thread,
Politely talking weather, fit to drop . . .

When once again the whole sky overhead
Flared blind with searchlights, and the shriek of shell
And scream of shrapnel roused him. Drowsily
He stared about him, wondering. Then he fell
Into deep dreamless slumber.

. . . . . .

He could see
Two dark eyes peeping at him, ere he knew

He was awake, and it again was day—
An August morning, burning to clear blue.
The frightened rabbit scuttled . . .
Far away,
A sound of firing . . . Up there, in the sky
Big dragon-flies hung hovering . . . Snowballs burst
About them . . . Flies and snowballs. With a cry
He crouched to watch the airmen pass—the first
That he'd seen under fire. Lord, that was pluck—
Shells bursting all about them—and what nerve!
They took their chance, and trusted to their luck.
At such a dizzy height to dip and swerve,
Dodging the shell-fire . . .
Hell! but one was hit,
And tumbling like a pigeon, plump . . .
Thank Heaven,
It righted, and then turned; and after it
The whole flock followed safe—four, five, six, seven,
Yes, they were all there safe. He hoped they'd win
Back to their lines in safety. They deserved,
Even if they were Germans . . . 'Twas no sin
To wish them luck. Think how that beggar swerved
Just in the nick of time!
He, too, must try
To win back to the lines, though, likely as not,
He'd take the wrong turn: but he couldn't lie
Forever in that hungry hole and rot,
He'd got to take his luck, to take his chance
Of being sniped by foes or friends. He'd be
With any luck in Germany or France
Or Kingdom-come, next morning. . . .

Drearily
The blazing day burnt over him, shot and shell
Whistling and whining ceaselessly. But light
Faded at last, and as the darkness fell
He rose, and crawled away into the night.

NO MAN'S LAND

James H. Knight-Adkin

No Man's Land is an eerie sight
At early dawn in the pale gray light.

Never a house and never a hedge
In No Man's Land from edge to edge,
And never a living soul walks there
To taste the fresh of the morning air;—
Only some lumps of rotting clay,
That were friends or foemen yesterday.

What are the bounds of No Man's Land?
You can see them clearly on either hand,
A mound of rag-bags gray in the sun,
Or a furrow of brown where the earthworks run
From the eastern hills to the western sea,
Through field or forest o'er river and lea;
No man may pass them, but aim you well
And Death rides across on the bullet or shell.

But No Man's Land is a goblin sight
When patrols crawl over at dead o' night;
Boche or British, Belgian or French,
You dice with Death when you cross the trench.
When the "rapid," like fireflies in the dark,
Flits down the parapet spark by spark,
And you drop for cover to keep your head
With your face on the breast of the four months' dead.

The man who ranges in No Man's Land
Is dogged by the shadows on either hand
When the star-shell's flare, as it bursts o'erhead,
Scares the gray rats that feed on the dead,
And the bursting bomb or the bayonet-snatch
May answer the click of your safety-catch,
For the lone patrol, with his life in his hand,
Is hunting for blood in No Man's Land.

EXPOSURE

Wilfred Owen

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knife us . . .
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent . . .
Low drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient . . .
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire.
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.
What are we doing here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow . . .
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of gray,
But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause and renew,
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,
But nothing happens.

II

Pale flakes with lingering stealth come feeling for our faces—
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-dazed,
Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.
Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk fires glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets jingle there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs;
Shutters and doors all closed: on us the doors are closed—
We turn back to our dying.

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Now ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore we're born,
For love of God seems dying.

To-night, His frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands and puckering foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in their shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
But nothing happens.

ON THE WIRE

ROBERT W. SERVICE

O God take the sun from the sky!
It's burning me, scorching me up.
God, can't You hear my cry?
Water! A poor little cup!
It's laughing, the cursed sun!
See how it swells and swells
Fierce as a hundred hells!
God, will it never have done?
It's searing the flesh of my bones;
It's beating with hammers red
My eyeballs into my head;
It's parching my very moans.
See! It's the size of the sky,
And the sky is a torrent of fire,
Foaming on me as I lie
Here on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Of the thousands that wheeze and hum
Heedlessly over my head,
Why can't a bullet come,
Pierce to my brain instead,
Blacken forever my brain,
Finish forever my pain?
Here in the hellish glare
Why must I suffer so?
Is it God doesn't care?
Is it God doesn't know?
Oh, to be killed outright,
Clean in the clash of the fight!
That is a golden death,
That is a boon; but this . . .
Drawing an anguished breath
Under a hot abyss,
Under a stooping sky
Of seething, sulphurous fire,
Scorching me up as I lie
Here on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Hasten, O God, Thy night!
Hide from my eyes the sight

Of the body I stare and see
Shattered so hideously.
I can't believe that it's mine.
My body was white and sweet,
Flawless and fair and fine,
Shapely from head to feet;
Oh, no, I can never be
The thing of horror I see
Under the rifle fire,
Trussed on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Of night and of death I dream;
Night that will bring me peace,
Coolness and starry gleam,
Stillness and death's release:
Ages and ages have passed,—
Lo! it is night at last,—
Night! but the guns roar out
Night! but the hosts attack.
Red and yellow and black
Geysers of doom upspout.
Silver and green and red
Star-shells hover and spread.
Yonder off to the right
Fiercely kindles the fight;
Roaring near and more near,
Thundering now in my ear;
Close to me, close. . . . Oh, hark!
Someone moans in the dark.
I hear, but I cannot see,
I hear as the rest retire,
Someone is caught like me,
Caught on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Again the shuddering dawn,
Weird and wicked and wan;
Again, and I've not yet gone.
The man whom I heard is dead.
Now I can understand:
A bullet hole in his head.
A pistol gripped in his hand.
Well, he knew what to do,—
Yes, and now I know too. . . .

Hark, the resentful guns!
Oh, how thankful am I
To think my beloved ones
Will never know how I die!
I've suffered more than my share;
I'm shattered beyond repair;
I've fought like a man the fight,
And now I demand the right
(God! how his fingers cling!)
To do without shame this thing.
Good! there's a bullet still;
Now I'm ready to fire;
Blame me, God, if You will,
Here on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

DEATH

ALAN MACKINTOSH

Because I have made light of death
And mocked at wounds and pain,
The doom is laid on me to die
Like the humble men in days gone by
That angered me to hear them cry
For pity to me in vain.

I shall not go out suddenly
As many a man has done,
But I shall lie as those men lay,
Longing for death the whole long day,
Praying, as I heard those men pray,
And none shall heed me, none.

The fierce waves will go surging on
Before they tend to me.
Oh, God of battles, I pray you send
No word of pity, no help, no friend—
That if my spirit break at the end
None may be there to see.

THE NIGHT BEFORE AND THE NIGHT AFTER THE CHARGE

PATRICK MACGILL

On sword and gun the shadows reel and riot,
A lone breeze whispers at the dug-out door,
The trench is silent and the night is quiet
And boys in khaki slumber on the floor.
A sentinel on guard, my watch I keep
And guard the dug-out where my comrades sleep.

The moon looks down upon a ghost-like figure,
Delving a furrow in the cold, damp sod.
The grave is ready and the lonely digger
Leaves the departed to their rest and God.
I shape a little cross and plant it deep
To mark the dug-out where my comrades sleep.

THE NIGHT SOWERS

CLINTON SCOLLARD

Lo, these are they that toil by night
With mattock and with spade,
Beneath the flickering lanthorn light,
In meadow and in glade!
Row upon long and crowded row,
How gruesome is the seed they sow!

Back on the fair and furrowed lands
The earth and sod they toss,
And some, with reverential hands,
Place here and there a cross,
A simple rough-hewn cross as though
To sanctify the seed they sow.

Oh, may some flower of love arise
Above the bruisèd sod,
Some flower of love to greet the eyes,
The grieving eyes of God!
Some flower of love whereon shall fall
The dews of peace perennial!

THE PYRES

HERMANN HAGEDORN

Pyres in the night, in the night!
  And the roaring yellow and red.
Trooper, trooper, why so white?
  We are out to gather our dead.
We have brought dry boughs from the bloody wood
  And the torn hill-side;
We have felled great trunks, wet with blood
  Of brothers that died;
We have piled them high for a flaming bed,
Hemlock and ash and pine for a bed,
A throne in the night, a throne for a bed—
And we go to gather our dead.

There where the oaks loom, dark and high,
  Over the somber hill,
  Body on body, cold and still,
Under the stars they lie.
There where the silver river runs,
  Careless and calm as fate,
Mowed, mowed by the terrible guns,
  The stricken brothers wait.
There by the smoldering house, and there
Where the red smoke hangs on the heavy air,
Under the ruins, under the hedge,
Cheek by cheek at the forest-edge;
Back to breast, three men deep,
  Hearing not bugle or drum,
In the desperate trench they died to keep,
Under the starry dome they sleep,
  Murmuring, "Brothers, come!"

This way! I heard a call
  Like a stag's when he dies.
Under the willows I saw him fall.
  Under the willows he lies.
Give me your hand. Raise him up.
  Lift his head. Strike a light.
This morning we shared a crust and a cup.
  He wants no supper tonight.

Take his feet. Here the shells
  Broke all day long,
Moaning and shrieking hell's
  Bacchanalian song!
Last night he helped me bear
  Men to hell's feting.
Tomorrow, maybe, somewhere,
  We, too, shall lie waiting.

Pyres in the night, in the night!
  Weary and sick and dumb,
Under the flickering, faint starlight
  The drooping gleaners come.
Out of the darkness, dim
  Shadowy shadow-bearers,
Dragging into the bale fire's rim
  Pallid death-farers.

Pyres in the night, in the night!
  In the plain, on the hill.
No volleys for their last rite.
  We need our powder—to kill.
High on their golden bed,
  Pile up the dead!

Pyres in the night, in the night!
  Torches, piercing the gloom!
Look! How the sparks take flight!
  Stars, stars, make room!
Smoke, that was bone and blood!
  Hark! The deep roar.
It is the souls telling God
  The glory of WAR!

THE EFFECT

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

The effect of our bombardment was terrific. One man told me he had never seen so many dead before.—War Correspondent

"He'd never seen so many dead before."
They sprawled in yellow daylight while he swore
And gasped and lugged his everlasting load
Of bombs along what once had been a road.

"How peaceful are the dead."
Who put that silly gag in some one's head?

"He'd never seen so many dead before."
The lilting words danced up and down his brain,
While corpses jumped and capered in the rain.
No, no; he wouldn't count them any more. . . .
The dead have done with pain:
They've choked; they can't come back to life again.

When Dick was killed last week he looked like that,
Flapping along the fire-step like a fish,
After the blazing crump had knocked him flat. . . .
"How many dead? As many as ever you wish.
Don't count 'em; they're too many.
Who'll buy my nice fresh corpses, two a penny?"

IV

THE DANCE OF DEATH

THE PIED PIPER

William Ellery Leonard

The huge Pied Piper, in a giant dance,
Began his piping on the fields of France.
The huge Pied Piper, with a fife of steel,
Danced through the nations, toe and heel.
Four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadoon.

For his legs were hosed in stripèd bands,
And his sleeves were stripèd to the fingering hands,
And his cape was stripèd to his piping throat,
And the stripèd cap fluttered to step and note. . . .
Stripes up and down, and left and right . . .
Red, green, yellow, black, blue, white . . .
Speckled between with star and crest—
But the red stripes O! they outnumbered the rest.
And when failed the lure of his garments pied,
He juggled new bunting from his chest inside.
So four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadoon.

With a fife of steel to puckered lips,
And two cheeks puffing for his finger-tips,
He shrilled each tune of the lure of war,
And danced each measure of his repertoire:
He piped and he jigged of fear and hate,
Of love of country and glory of state:
And he piped of God and he piped of man—
This giant Jester, this Charlatan.
And for those who loathed his piping shrill
He piped a tune more alluring still:
"Then hurry to my piping more than ever,
To *end* my piping, now or never!"
And four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadoon.

And the few still slack, as he flung pied cape,
And the few still slack, as he piped his jape,
O the few still slack, as each million reels
Jigging to the river, behind his heels,
They whipped or they hanged to bar or tree,
And passed with the Piper down the lea. . . .

To a red, red river, all the host—
And the Piper walked, like a shadow or ghost. . . .
And the Piper walked, like Christ on the sea
In the sunset-storm of Galilee. . . .
And he danced on the waters to his latest tune,
And the Millions perished in a jigging rigadoon.

THE OLD KINGS

MARGARET WIDDEMER

And on earth peace among men.

All of the Old Kings
  Are wakened from their sleep,
Arthur out of Avalon,
  Ogier from the deep,
Redbeard from his Dragon-Rock,
  Sigurd from his fen . . .
"Is it time," they rise and cry,
  "To lead our hosts again?"

They have donned their wingèd helms,
  They would rise and reign,
The young king Sebastian,
  The old king Charlemagne,
Harold with his great bow,
  Roland with his horn. . . .
Men have heard their horses' hoofs
  Many a scarlet morn!

The old kings have risen . . .
  Where the hosts advance
Redbeard cries his Germans on,
  Karl cries out for France,
Up and down the battlefield
  Ghostly armies beat,
Stilly down the gray sea glides
  Olaf's shadow-fleet:

Up and down the red fields
  Men have seen them go,
Seen the long plumes on the wind,
  Seen the pennons flow,
Harry out of Agincourt
  Sends his bowmen wide,
Joan that has forgiven them
  Battles at their side. . . .

Christ, king of Paradise,
  Hasten with Thy hosts,
Angels all in silver mail,
  Saints and blessed ghosts,
Cry the long swords sheathed again,
  Cry the pennons furled,
Lest under Ragnarok
  Lie the shattered world!

"AND GOD SHALL BE KING OVER THE WHOLE EARTH" [1]

ARNO NADEL

My idea of a King?
God.
My concept of Empire?
The whole, sweet earth.

God, what men have done to mock you!
In your name made creed and convention!
Earth, how man has torn you up,
Plunder of pagan robbers!

Instead of peoples
Living
Like families, neighbors, peacefully,
Men, with swords of death have cut you into pieces,
States,
Plunderers and murderers!

If only I could be
The last prophet
Of the divine day to come
And God, the disavowed, could really hope to reign!

[1] Translated from the German by Coley Taylor.

THE KINGS

HENRY WILLIAM HOYNE

Three kings riding forth of old
(Myrrh and frankincense and gold),

Three kings waiting fearful dawn
Where the battle-lines are drawn.

Kings of bloody strife, how far
You have wandered from your star!

WILD WEATHER [1]

KATHARINE LEE BATES

A great wind sweeps
Across the world, hurling to heaps
Of gilded rubbish crowns and thrones, mere gleam
And flicker of dry leaves in its fierce path,
A wind whose very wrath
Springs from white Alpine crests of thought and dream.

What sword can quell
An unleashed tempest, and compel
Hush to the thunder, patience to the storm?
The maddened blast that buffets sea and land
Blows under high command,
Rending and riving only to transform.

May its wild wings
Burst the old tanglement of things,
Those withered vines and brambles that enmesh
The leaping foot! May its rough flail destroy
Hedges that limit joy,
Leaving, like rain, a silvery earth and fresh!

Faith shall not quail
For broken branches of the gale.
Time is a strong corrival and will win.
When hurricane has done its dread behest,

[1] Written November 12, 1918; printed as one of the poems in the "Victory and Peace Paean," Boston Evening Transcript, November 23, 1918, under the editorship of William Stanley Braithwaite, who published them again in 1919 as a volume under title "Victory."

And forests are at rest,
His quiet hand will lead the sunshine in.

CONQUERORS

Carl John Bostelmann

With Caesar dead now, and Augustus dust,
Tribunal tyranny in Rome is done.
Attila, Xerxes and Napoleon
Have known kings' splendor and departed. Rust
Of rebel years their sheathèd swords encrusts,
And slow time hides the ugly scars upon
The stricken fields where war's cold carrion
Has fed old buzzards with its crumbs and crusts.

The dew-drenched meadows by the Marne again
Are occupied with crops, and Waterloo
Is wild with flowers as deep thunders cease
Their long reverberation. Terror's reign
Is ended now. The Belgian sky is blue,
And life is theirs who love and keep their peace.

REMARKS ABOUT KINGS

Henry van Dyke

God said, "I am tired of kings,"—
But that was a long while ago!
And meantime man said, "No,—
I like their looks in their robes and rings."
So he crowned a few more,
And they went on playing the game as before,
Fighting and spoiling things.

Man said, "I am tired of kings!
Sons of the robber-chiefs of yore,
They make me pay for their lust and their war;
I am the puppet, they pull the strings;
The blood of my heart is the wine they drink.
I will govern myself for awhile I think,
And see what that brings!"

Then God, who made the first remark,
Smiled in the dark.

THE CHANT OF THE VULTURES

EDWIN MARKHAM

We are circling, glad of the battle: we joy in the smell of the smoke.
Fight on in the hell of the trenches: we publish your names with a croak!
Ye will lie in dim heaps when the sunset blows cold on the reddening sand;
Yet fight, for the dead will have wages—a death-clutch of dust in the hand.
Ye have given us banquet, O kings, and still do we clamor for more:
Vast, vast is our hunger, as vast as the sea-hunger gnawing the shore.

'Tis well ye are swift with your signals—the blaze of the banners, the blare
Of the bugles, the boom of battalions, the cannon-breath hot on the air.
It is for our hunger ye hurry, it is for our feast ye are met:
Be sure we will never forget you, O servants that never forget!
For we are the Spirits of Battle, the peerage of greed we defend:
Our lineage rose from the Night, and we go without fellow or friend.

We were ere our servant Sesostris spread over the Asian lands
The smoke of the blood of the peoples, and scattered their bones to the sands.
We circled in revel for ages above the Assyrian stream,
While Babylon builded her beauty, and faded to dust and to dream.
We scattered our laughter on nations—and Troy was a word and a waste,
The glory of Carthage was ruined, the grandeur of Rome was effaced!

And we blazoned the name of Timour, as he harried his herd of kings;
And the host of his hordes wound on, a dragon with undulant rings.
And we slid down the wind upon France, when the steps of the earthquake passed,
When the Bastile bloomed into flame, and the heavens went by on the blast.
We hung over Austerlitz, cheering the armies with jubilant cries:
We scented three kings at the carnage, and croaked our applause from the skies.

O kings, ye have catered to vultures—have chosen to feed us, forsooth,
The joy of the world and her glory, the hope of the world and her youth.
O kings, ye are diligent lackeys: we laurel your names with our praise,
For ye are the staff of our comfort, for ye are the strength of our days.
Then spur on the host in the trenches to give up the sky at a stroke:
We tell all the winds of their glory: we publish their fame with a croak!

THE FIDDLER OF BERLIN

HERMANN HAGEDORN

"And there came a Fiddler, whose name was Truth"

Night, and a black pall over the city,
Mist, and the wind's cry, shrill and thin—
Who is he who goes in pity
With his fiddle under his chin?
His brow is grave, his eyes are stern,
A slow dawn wreathes his hair,
And the music he makes shivers and shakes
Like hands the high windows where misery wakes,
And, faint as breath on a bubble, breaks
The dying lamp on the stair.

Winds, and blown fogs over the city.
Lo, the white-faced, huddled throng!
Who is he who goes in pity,
Fiddling his terrible song?
The babes in their mothers' arms
Hear it, wide-eyed;
And the children come in swarms
And run at his side,
Hearing the silken, sad refrain
Of the fiddler's magical, tragical strain,
Warm as the wind and soft as the rain
And terrible as the tide.

Out of the houses the women come,
Mothers and daughters and wives.

From loving and remembering numb,
White through the night, the women come,
  Bearing the shards of their lives.
Lo, the fiddler plays his song
  Of madness and defeat,
And out of the houses the women throng
  And follow him down the street.

And the dead, the dead arise and come!
  Pallid from burden-bearing
The sons of the drum from slumber come
  With eyes like torches flaring.
From their gory bed the battle-dead
  Rise up, resolved and strong,
And follow the shimmering, glimmering thread
  Of the fiddler's terrible song.

The children moan, the women cry,
  The ghosts wail like the wind.
But the fiddler's eye is fixed on high
  And he heeds not the host behind.
But loud as the roaring tide in flood
He plays his terrible chant of God.
And the houses crumble and fall,
  And the steeples reel like ships,
And the rulers rush from the council-hall
  With wild cries on their lips.
Lo, the fiddler plays his high refrain
Over and over and over again . . .

But the rulers and their boasts
Are trampled under the feet of his hosts,—
  The feet of fatherless children,
And broken women, and ghosts.

VISION OF WAR [1]

LINCOLN COLCORD

I went out into the night of quiet stars;
I looked up at the wheeling heavens, at the mysterious firmament;
I thought of the awful distances out there, of the incredible magnitudes, of space and silence and eternity;

[1] Abridged.

I thought of man, his life, his love, his dream;
I thought of his body, how it is born and grows, and of his spirit that cannot be explained.
All about me slept the land in peace, and nature slept in deep security;
An off-shore wind had died at sunset, the bay was calm and golden as twilight fell. . . .
I walked on through the village, I saw the lights go out in houses as men and women prepared for bed;
Safe and secure, the homes of neighbors rested in the shadow of tall trees, that had been growing there peacefully a long time;
I have never seen the world so calm, the air so clear and still;
I have never known an hour so full of quietness.

II

Hour of the War!
Now, now—and here—on this same earth, and under this same sky!
Now!—Now!—The War!—The War!—The War!

Night, and a sodden field, and starlight over all,
And on the ground the bodies of dead men lying;
Tumbled, broken, grotesque, in attitudes unhuman, in lumpish, swollen heaps they lie,
Where death suddenly snatched them up and flung them down.

A strange, dark, silent scene;
Here passed the awful charge three days ago;
Here met the choking volley, shattered out and fell.

Three days and nights they have been lying here;
No help could reach them, cast between the battle lines;
No help is needed now.

Slowly above their heads the conflict wore itself away;
Calm settled on the shaking, riven air;
The sharp cries of the wounded stopped one by one, their groans grew fainter;
A few crawled off—the others lay as they had fallen, under the sun and stars;
Then the third night, and peace at last, and quietness restored.
(*Our country calls! Our country and our King!*)

Over the open fields, trampling the crops, dropping to fire, rising to run;
(Some never rising, never again to rise;)

Straggling, thinning, wavering (God, it is hopeless!—it is too much!),
Onward, onward pressing, rushing and driving onward;
(I did not know that men could be so reckless and brave!)
Mounting the opposite slope, cutting their way through entanglements;
Gaining the outer trenches (deadly work for the bayonets!),
Shouting, cursing, groaning, stabbing, wrestling, clubbing with butts, fighting at last with bare fists;
Annihilating the enemy, capturing the position!
(*Victory! Victory! Victory!*
Our country calls! Our country and our King!)

(On the open field lie many huddled shapes;
The wounded are stirring feebly out there, like men awaking from a violent dream;
They lift their heads, they stretch their arms, they struggle to rise on their elbows;
They sit up, staring around—they crawl like snails among the crops;
A screaming horse dashes athwart the line, dragging his entrails on the ground.)

. . . . . .

Today, along the old frontiers of Rome, the battle closes;
Germans invade a German land, Germans defend it;
Germans with Germans join to strike at Germans;
Hour of the War! Civil War of the Western World!

Why? Why?
Ah, God, on either side!—Ah, Christ, attacking and defending!—
Why?

See there, how brother grips with brother!
See how they fall, pulling each other down!
Nations at war! The State to be supported!
Lands loved, and lands despised! Lines drawn!
On one side, every last man looking east—on the other side, every last man looking west!
Whole peoples aflame with absolutely opposite ideas!
Different as black from white, yet all the same, all ordinary average men!
(*Our country calls! Our country and our King!*)

"Brother, lay down your arms!" I cried; and "Brother, lay down your arms!"

I looked up at the quiet, watchful stars;
Above me passed a whisper, louder and louder swelling;
The sighing of the souls of the slain in battle,
Telling triumphant news.

III

Listen!—could one be living?—come this way;
Here where a score of bodies are drawn mysteriously together,
A turning face catches a gleam of starlight,
A hand moves, winnowing the air.

"Water!"—No use, no use—too late;
His breast is shot away—don't move him—God, how he bled!
What is it, comrade? A letter—make a light:
"We have not heard since you left home. . . . I cannot bear it. . . ."
Turn the sheet over:—"Oh, my dear, be careful!"
Here is the signature—the address—a distant village;
You have been there—an ancient, quiet village of the north,
Fronting the open sea.
Yes, comrade, I will write—he smiles:
To lie there, thinking, suffering, remembering;
To be left to die alone!

IV

But not alone:
Passing brother, you have yet a grim companion;
Along the edge of the thicket just now, as I went to the brook down there for water,
I stumbled over something that must have been left from the charge a week ago:
A body that held the remnants of a man.
He had dragged himself to the brook, he lay imbedded in tall waving grass;
His stomach had been ripped open by shrapnel, maggots were heaving in the wound;
(Did you know that a man could live while maggots formed in his flesh?)
His muscles twitched convulsively, he was barely conscious;
He did not notice the match I struck, his eyes were filmed over, he would not drink;
The region that he inhabited was an unknown, unimaginable land;
(At home a woman waits for news of him:
It is well that she can never hear).

V

Pass on, pass on! Behold the mobilization of armies;
The men leaving their work at the counter and factory, dropping the plow where it stands in the field,
Flocking together, filling the towns, saying good-by to wife and children, taking a last look around;
(*Our country calls! Our country and our King!*)
. . . . . .

Pass on! Behold the charge;
Ready! Run low! Run wide!

"Take heart, take heart, my brother;
Search out the truth—know what is true.

"See where you stand, halfway between the past and the future;
Nothing ultimate yet, nothing entirely won.

"Look up! Behold the far, high, future dream!
Behold the truth! Know what is true!"

Out of my aching heart I cried, "Oh God, shall these things ever come again?
Shall not men throw away their arms, and live in peace?"

THE SONG THAT SHALL ATONE

KATHARINE LEE BATES

Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars:
see that ye be not troubled.

Wild Europe, red with Wodin's dreadful dew,
On fire with Loki's hate, more savage than
Beasts that we shame by likening to man,
Was it toward this the toiling centuries grew?

Was it for this the Reign of Love began
In that young heretic, that gracious Jew,
Whose race his followers flout the ages through?
Is Time at last a mere comedian,

Mocking in cap and bells our pompous boast
Of progress? Nay, we will not bear it so.

A million hands launch ships to succor woe;
The stars that shudder o'er the slaughtering host

Rain blessing on the Red Cross groups that go
Careless of shrapnel, emulous for the post
Where foul diseases wreak their uttermost
Of horror. Saintship walks incognito

As scoffing Science, but Christ knows his own.
Sway as it may the war-god's fell caprice,
The victories of Love shall still increase
Until at last, from all this wail and moan,

Rises the song of brotherhood to cease
No more, no more,—the song that shall atone
Even for this mad agony. The throne
That war is building is the throne of Peace.

THE SHOW

WILFRED OWEN

My soul looked down from a vague height with Death,
As unremembering how I rose or why,
And saw a sad land, weak with sweats of dearth,
Gray, cratered like the moon with hollow woe,
And fitted with great pocks and scabs of plagues.

Across its beard, that horror of harsh wire,
There moved thin caterpillars, slowly uncoiled.
It seemed they pushed themselves to be as plugs
Of ditches, where they writhed and shrivelled, killed.

By them had slimy paths been trailed and scraped
Round myriad warts that might be little hills.

From gloom's last dregs these long-strung creatures crept,
And vanished out of dawn down hidden holes.

(And smell came up from those foul openings
As out of mouths, or deep wounds deepening.)

On dithering feet upgathered, more and more,
Brown strings towards strings of gray, with bristling spines,
All migrants from green fields, intent on mire.

Those that were gray, of more abundant spawns,
Ramped on the rest and ate them and were eaten.

I saw their bitten backs curve, loop, and straighten,
I watched those agonies curl, lift, and flatten.

Whereat, in terror what that sight might mean,
I reeled and shivered earthward like a feather.

And Death fell with me, like a deepening moan.

And He, picking a manner of worm, which half had hid
Its bruises in the earth, but crawled no further,
Showed me its feet, the feet of many men,
And the fresh-severed head of it, my head.

THE MOUNTAIN OF SKELETONS

E. Merrill Root

A mountain strikes into a clouded sky,
  Abrupt and black. Its crags are cold and bare
Like rocks of ice. No voice comes there, nor foot:
  But the wind wanders there.

The wind walks there and whimpers as of old,
  And runs like ghostly packs of wolves that wail
And follow forever fleshless thru the dark
  Some phantom trail.

Like giant cobwebs on the flinty crags
  Bones glint and glimmer palely thru the dark;
Skulls wag and tinkle, stirred by winds whose tread
  They have no ears to mark.

A thousand brittle skeletons lie there:
  Rust long has eaten the iron of their spears;
The very jackals that once ate their flesh
  Are dead a hundred years.

They slowly break beneath the feet of time
  Nearer to dust. Some day they'll gleam no more.
But Oh! what people are they? And they died
  In what forgotten war?

THE MOUNTAIN OF SKULLS

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

All guns are silent. . . . "I have won," he saith,
And girds his ample cloak. . . .
He. . . . Who? . . . Not Pershing, Haig, or Foch?
"Old Hindenburg?" some jokester whispereth
(For when we win, we joke). . . .

He. . . . *Who?* . . . The great King, DEATH.

And in the quiet of the armistice
He takes a long, long journey in his mirth
(No Marshal takes a furlough such as this)
Through many lands of earth. . . .

Gathering the skulls. . . .

To Archangel among the Arctic gulls . . .
To Kiao-chow's eagle-dedicated rocks . . .
Along the Tigris on to Bagdad gate . . .
The Syrian foothills and old temple blocks . . .
By palm and date . . . and the mud-flats of the Nile . . .
Pylons and papyrus reeds . . .
And Tanganika's swamps and jungle weeds,
And tropic leaves, green-glazed as tile . . .
And back . . . gleaning in holes of shells,
Or in mired cartwheels, or in poisoned wells . . .
Back . . . he goes . . . and goes . . .
To the red sand-pits of the Dardanelles . . .
And gaunt Armenian plateaus. . . .

Gathering the skulls. . . .

In the Carpathian snows . . .
On Alpine crags . . . and under each crevasse . . .
(He digs and pulls
For, where they fell, straightway they froze) . . .
In the Masurian morass
(Battalion by battalion in stark rows) . . .
And Serbia's oaken mountain pass . . .
And Flanders' poppy fields . . . (again . . . again) . . .
(Loosening from wire, tearing masks away,

Dragging from skeleton airplanes in burnt grass) . . .
And Marne and forests of Ardennes . . .
And roofless villages, all one Pompeii . . .

Gathering the skulls. . . .

Down the Atlantic deeps . . . and shallows . . .
The mid-abyss . . . the continental shelf . . .
Forgetting child-bed, hospital, and gallows,
To fetch the rest he does betake himself. . . .
Although for these
He pries out many a port-hole, many a hatch,
Before he culls
From strangled necks upon the hunchèd knees . . .
By Faulkland islands and Antarctic gulls . . .
And under seven seas.

Gathering the skulls. . . .

Picking off bits of skin in ghostly light
Amid the storm-winds' lulls . . .
Black skin . . . and bronze . . . and yellow . . .
But chiefly white, or what had once been white,
Beside white fellow . . . and white fellow . . .
Skulls . . . skulls . . . some broad . . . some long . . .
Some strong . . .
Some brittle . . .
Some big . . . and some so little . . .
Little.
He takes them all . . . with one same set grimace . . .
To his own place. . . .

II

Which now becomes the Mountain of the Skulls
At the red river of the Great Mogul's
Red Realms of silence in the sunset waste.
A red-white cone, in no green forest based,
It rises alone into a blood-red sky,
Out of its own bleak talus of gray chalk,
Girt with still clouds of ashen-red on high
(Like smoke that lingers when the last winds die),
Above the twisted slag of vanished fire
And rainless pits of dust that once was mire,
Over eternal fields of alkali. . . .

It glares in mute and changeless after-glows
Over a glassy, crimson stream that never flows. . . .
Changeless . . . as if, between the time
Of stars and setting sun,
Great Death upon that desolated clime
His last great work had done—
Blasting the very laws of day and night,
To gloat forever on that sight.

There is no stir, except the hollow roll
Of some lone skull, down like a bowl . . .
At horrible intervals . . . when the Mountain quakes
From deep, deep under,
As the still living earth shudders and shakes
With subterranean thunder.

III

Know you who built this Mountain of the Skulls,
Who piled these socket-heads—these husks and hulls?
Death knows who piled, who built. . . .
All the long ages of the race of man
For this must share the guilt!
The deep inveteracy of thought and act,
Forging from age to age the new machines
(From chariots scythed, to tanks and submarines),
Becoming tradition in each court and clan
With sanctions from romance and fact,
Had made a habit of a monstrous means,
Until the gesture of gun and sword and lance,
The quick-step, the salute, the bugle-blast,
Grew man's fixed nature by inheritance,
And this Today was born from out the Past.

Know you who reared this grinning pyramid
Of hairless polls with neither lip nor lid?
Death knows . . . and this true verse . . .
The European gamesters, sleek and fat
(Or wiry, gray, and bowing from the hip),
For this must share the curse!
A hundred years about a board adept
They played for this or that
(A coast, or isle, or stream, or mine, or ship),
An even hundred years, and never slept . . .
While gold-laced lackeys brought them wine to sip . . .

Beside the bank-book and the tall silk hat . . .
And one or two we justly deem the worse
Free not all others from the awful curse.

Know you what built this monument of state,
For the Eternal Potentate?
He knows . . . he knows:
The emboweled pest of all-contagious hate,
That in men's entrails did sit ill
The toxin whence their thinking did create
The devil-foemen each set out to kill.

He knows . . . he knows:
The tender instincts, fatal as they work,
Of hearth and home and orchard-plot and kirk,
The passion and the pride we name divine,
The dear, dear land and landscape, yours and mine,
One passion where whatever river flows—
The same by Rhone or Rhine.

He knows . . . he knows:
That exaltation in transfigured eyes,
That insane dance of love beyond all love,
That fierce infection of self-sacrifice
(All other primal instincts far above),
The god's intoxication,
As seized the Corybantes in old woods,
And maddened the Maenads by the Phrygian floods,—
The supreme ecstasy of immolation . . .
Save that the god was not the God of Birth,
Or of the New Wine that gladdeneth—
Not the Great Mother, Earth,
Not Dionysius—but Eternal Death.

What raised Skull Mountain to the sky?—
He knows . . . he knows:
That cunning power of self-doomed mankind
Revenge, rage, ruin, greed, to justify
By concepts deftly put, whereby
It gives itself—by self conceived, combined,
Out of the welter of its corporate life,
The intolerable chaos of its stress and strife—
Reasons and rhetoric of how-and-why,
Which seem a light to who before were blind,

And urge a cause and strengthen hosts to die,
As reason summons from around, behind,
The quickened faith, the prayer on high,—
Till Thought and Ethic, vision-eyed
(By the great Ironist's best master-stroke
Since from the ape man first awoke),
End in one suicide.

IV

And yet there are who round that Mount would grope,
Saying, they too, like Death, can count the loss. . . .
Saying, no less, it is the Mount of Hope. . . .
Saying, "We'll crown it with a golden cross."

V

Know you the Mountain of the Skulls
At the red river of the Great Mogul's
Red Realms of silence in the sunset sands?—
Know you it *really*—what it *is*—and WAS?
By all the dead of all the lands,
The loves, the hopes, the death-pangs (day or night),
(Or short or long)
That housed in all these empty shells
(Where now not even the living blow-flies buzz,
Or wild bees build their cells),
By this vast generation, robbed of light,
Of flowers, of children, poesy, and song,—
In name of future good, to right . . .
(So we have said) . . . to right the present wrong,—
By all the dead of all the lands,
We'll swear this Mountain stands,
In Kingdom of Great Death forever stands,
To speak to Life one word forevermore,
On every sea and shore:
No League of Peace (though that awhile might save,
If one same law upon each capitol,
Upon each arch and architrave,
Were clearly, deeply carved),
No League nor Law will do:
But those despisèd few
In every land who did refuse each call—
The dungeon-chained, the dungeon-starved—
Must be the prophets of the New
Until the few are all.

THE REAPERS

LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT

Red are the hands of the Reapers,
And the harvest is so white!
Red are the feet that are treading
The threshing floors by night:
And, on the young brows, dripping
As with the dews of morn,
Deep rose-red are the woundings,
Like scars of a crown of thorn.

Tired, so many, with reaping,—
Tired with treading the grain,
Still they lie, in their sleeping,
Low in the Valley of Pain,—
Never again to be quaffing
The joy of life, like wine;
Never again to be laughing
In Youth's glad hour divine.

Birds shall sing in the branches,
Children dance by the shore;
But they who shared the red reaping
Shall come back never more.
Let whoso can forget them,
Walking life's noisy ways;
We who have looked on the Reapers
Go quietly, all our days.

THE CARNIVAL

CLINTON SCOLLARD

Oh, the autumn-tide is the carnival tide,
And what shall the carnival wear?
Shall it be the blue of the haze-hung skies
That is blent with gold and with topaz dyes?
Shall it be the pied soft green that lies
On the meadow slope and the mountain side,
Shimmering far and fair?

Nay, none of these for the carnival tide,
For red is the carnival wear!
And never a redder carnival shone
Than now where the San and the Aisne flow on
In the red of the eve, in the red of the dawn,
And the war-fires rule and the thunders ride
Under the autumn air!

Of what avail is this carnival tide,
This blood-red carnival wear,
These carnival lines that rock and reel
And eddy and sally and meet and wheel
And break like a surge on a shore of steel?
Aye, what, when the doom-led men have died,
Does the King of the carnival care?

THE REAPER

JOHN OXENHAM

All through the blood-red Autumn,
When the harvest came to the full;
When the days were sweet with sunshine,
And the nights were wonderful,—
The Reaper reaped without ceasing.

All through the roaring Winter,
When the skies were black with wrath,
When earth alone slept soundly,
And the seas were white with froth,—
The Reaper reaped without ceasing.

All through the quick of the Spring-time,
When the birds sang cheerily,
When the trees and the flowers were burgeoning,
And men went wearily,—
The Reaper reaped without ceasing.

All through the blazing Summer,
When the year was at its best,
When Earth, subserving God alone,
In her fairest robes was dressed,—
The Reaper reaped without ceasing.

So, through the Season's roundings,
While nature waxed and waned,
And only man by thrall of man
Was scarred and marred and stained,—
The Reaper reaped without ceasing.

How long, O Lord, shall the Reaper
Harry the growing field?
Stretch out Thy Hand and stay him,
Lest the future no fruit yield!—
And the Gleaner find nought for His gleaning.

Thy Might alone can end it,—
This fratricidal strife.
Our souls are sick with the tale of death,
Redeem us back to life!—
That the Gleaner be glad in His gleaning.

THE POET IN THE DESERT [1]

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

Just over there where yon purple peak,
Like a great amethyst, gems the brow of the Desert,
I sprawled flat in the bunch-grass, a target
For the just bullets of my brown brothers betrayed.
I was a soldier, and, at command,
Had gone out to kill and be killed.
This was not majestic.
The little grey gophers
Sat erect and laughed at me.
In that silent hour before the dawn,
When Nature drowses for a moment,
We swept like fire over the smoke-browned tee-pees;
Their conical tops peering above the willows.
We frightened the air with crackle of rifles,
Women's shrieks, children's screams,
Shrill yells of savages;
Curses of Christians.
The rifles chuckled continually.
A poor people who asked nothing but freedom,
Butchered in the dark.

[1] Abridged.

The dawn would not linger,
Nor the slow-advancing day refuse to come.
The larks saluted the morn
As if there had been no murder.
In the accusing light of the remorseless Sun
It was not good to see brown boys and girls
Scattered about the grass in Death's repose;
On their sides, in reckless weariness.
On their backs, arms sprawled out carelessly,
Or drawn over their eyes, as if to shut out the light.
Nor pleasant to see the fearful gate-way
In the just-budding maiden-bosom,
Whence startled Life had leaped to search the void.
Chubby babies, with a blue bullet-hole
In the innocent breast, the soft little belly.
And mothers whose bosoms ran blood with the milk.
They lay quiet in great dignity;
Their eyes staring at us indifferent;
Almost contemptuous.

Nothing is ever blotted.
Even the grass-roots remember
When they have fed on blood.
Justice, relentless, clear-visioned;
Red drop for drop, carefully insisting
That the debt be paid.

I have heard the screams of innocent, dumb horses,
Disemboweled;
And have stopped my ears
Against the cries of my mangled fellows,
Begging, for the pity of Christ, that they be shot,
And their agony ended.
Emperors, presidents, spinners of diplomacy,
Have you ever heard the ravings of those
Who, through the scarlet door of the torture-chamber,
Reached to clearer vision and died
Cursing "God," "Country," "Patriotism,"
Words which had betrayed them?

O young men, with dawn behind your eyes
And Destiny held as a puzzling toy
Between your strong and nervous hands,
Why do you crowd forward to the sacrifice?

Young men who are about to die,
Stay a moment and take my hand,
Who am also about to die.
You have been carefully winnowed and selected
For the banqueting of the Hooded Skeleton
Which beckons, but says never a word;
I, too, would be satisfied
Why the young men must die,
And for what the maidens,
Treasure-caskets of the Infinite,
Must be robbed of the Gift
Preciously hoarded by the Miser Years.
Mystery,—forever inscrutable.
Unanswered; unanswering.
Wonderful beyond wonder.
Two streams forever flowed red from two sides
Toward a dreadful brink
Where, through thick clouds,
Two crimson cataracts
Poured into everlasting Darkness.
Young men,
And even more than young men,
Young women,
Guardians of the Future,
Tell me distinctly for what is the sacrifice?
I demand that you refuse to be satisfied,
That you unravel the old shoutings,
That you peer to the very bottom.
Draw in your breath delightedly,
And confidently insist:
"My life is my Own.
"A gift from the Ages,
"And to me precious
"Beyond estimation.
"I will deny authority.
"I will question all things.
"I will obstinately be informed
"Whence comes the battle?
"Whose is the combat?"
Young men,
And even more than young men,
Young women,
I charge you that in the large solitude
Where the soul may meditate undisturbed,

And in the great crowds where souls jostle together,
Examine all things and refuse to be answered
Till you are answered of your own souls.

WHAT DID YOU SEE OUT THERE, MY LAD?

JOHN OXENHAM

What did you see out there, my lad,
That has set that look in your eyes?
You went out a boy, you have come back a man,
With strange new depths underneath your tan;
What was it you saw out there, my lad,
That set such deeps in your eyes?

Strange things,—and sad,—and wonderful,—
Things that I scarce can tell,—
I have been in the sweep of the Reaper's scythe,—
With God,—and Christ,—and hell.

I have seen Christ doing Christly deeds;
I have seen the devil at play;
I have grimped to the sod in the hand of God;
I have seen the God-less pray.

I have seen Death blast out suddenly
From a clear blue summer sky;
I have slain like Cain with a blazing brain;
I have heard the wounded cry.

I have lain alone among the dead,
With no hope but to die;
I have seen them killing the wounded ones;
I have seen them crucify.

I have seen the Devil in petticoats
Wiling the souls of men;
I have seen great sinners do great deeds
And turn to their sins again.

I have sped through hells of fiery hail,
With fell red-fury shod;
I have heard the whisper of a voice;
I have looked in the face of God.

You've a right to your deep, high look, my lad,
You have met God in the ways;
And no man looks into his face
But he feels it all his days.
You've a right to your deep, high look, my lad,
And we thank Him for His grace.

FROM THE YOUTH OF ALL NATIONS

H. C. Harwood

Think not, my elders, to rejoice
When from the nations' wreck we rise,
With a new thunder in our voice
And a new lightning in our eyes.

You called with patriotic sneers,
And drums and sentimental songs.
We came from out the vernal years
Thus bloodily to right your wrongs.

The sins of many centuries,
Sealed by your indolence and fright,
Have earned us these our agonies:
The thunderous appalling night,

When from the lurid darkness came
The pains of poison and of shell,
The broken heart, the world's ill-fame,
The lonely arrogance of hell.

Faintly, as from a game afar,
Your wrangles and your patronage
Come drifting to the work of war
Which you have made our heritage.

Oh, chide us not. Not ours the crime.
Oh, praise us not. It is not won,
The fight which we shall make sublime
Beneath an unaccustomed sun.

The simple world of childhood fades
Beyond the Styx that all have passed;

This is a novel land of shades,
  Wherein no ancient glories last.

A land of desolation blurred
  By mists of penitence and woe,
Where every hope must be deferred
  And every river backward flow.

Not on this grey and ruined plain
  Shall we obedient recall
Your cities to rebuild again
  For their inevitable fall.

We kneel at no ancestral shrine.
  With admirable blasphemy
We desecrate the old divine
  And dream a new eternity.

Destroy the history of men,
  The weary cycle of decay.
We shall not pass that way again,
  We tread a new untrodden way.

Though scattered wider yet our youth
  On every sea and continent,
There shall come bitter with the truth
  A fraction of the sons you sent.

When slowly with averted head,
  Some darkly, some with halting feet,
And bowed with mourning for the dead
  We walk the cheering, fluttering street,

A music terrible, austere
  Shall rise from our returning ranks
To change your merriment to fear,
  And slay upon your lips your thanks;

And on the brooding, weary brows
  Of stronger sons, close enemies,
Are writ the ruin of your house
  And swift usurping dynasties.

HOW CAN I SING?

F. C. Boden

Loudly the chanticleer now crows,
So loud he makes the morning ring,
He'll wake men up, so hard he blows,
But till he does I cannot sing.

How can I sing while others weep
And groan beneath their travailing,
And cry a God who's fast asleep
And hears them not—how can I sing?

How can I sing when I've no salve
For putrid sore and deadly sting?—
And people sleep in rags and starve
And will not wake—how can I sing?

There's better men alive to-day
Than God or any such poor thing,
And yet the nations rob and slay
And will not cease.—How can I sing?

O chanticleer that sounds the dawn,
Now rouse them with your heralding,
O chanticleer, you bring the morn,
And till you do I cannot sing.

For men sleep sound and would not hear
And 'twill be vain, my flute-playing,
So sound your note, you chanticleer,
And wake them up that I may sing.

THE REDDENED ROAD

H. M. Tickener

What of the empires that are built on beds of dead men's bones,
What of the piles of princely pomp, the palaces and thrones?
With none to blow the bugle blast to call the dogs of war,
Who then would mark to murder those they never met before?

One peasant lad, who plows the fields where grows the golden corn,
Is nobler breed than all the whelps the wolves of war have borne,
One song sung by some genial soul along some sheltered glade
Shall hush some day the savage shock that warrior's guns have made.

One gleam of love that suckling babe in mother's eyes beheld,
Shall silence yet the threats of doom that tyrant's hate has yelled;
One word of brotherhood and peace, one breath of fragrant flowers,
These be the things of truest worth in this old world of ours.

BUTTONS

CARL SANDBURG

I have been watching the war map slammed up for advertising in front of the newspaper office.
Buttons—red and yellow buttons—blue and black buttons—are shoved back and forth across the map.

A laughing young man, sunny with freckles,
Climbs a ladder, yells a joke to somebody in the crowd,
And then fixes a yellow button one inch west
And follows the yellow button with a black button one inch west.

(Ten thousand men and boys twist on their bodies in a red soak along a river edge,
Gasping of wounds, calling for water, some rattling death in their throats.)
Who by Christ would guess what it cost to move two buttons one inch on the war map here in front of the newspaper office where the freckle-faced young man is laughing to us?

OUR DEAD

E. L. PETERSON, JR.

We have forgotten them, thank God! They fell,
And were forgotten. Now make way, make room
For others. You know how. While the pale bloom
Of youth is on them. Bands, flags, speeches! Tell

Them their country calls. Young breasts will swell
With pride. Then brilliant parades, and camp! Now groom
Them well. What youth discerns his shell-rocked tomb?
Young men were made for war; the dead for hell.

We have forgotten them, thank God! They died,
And that was all. Be still—we may need more.
The chaplain sobs, and lifts his arms. "Abide
In peace, ye dead. Ye saints of God—and War!"
Pawns, puppets, and a youngster's broken toys,
Young men were made for war; God bless our boys!

THE RETURN OF AUGUST

PERCY MACKAYE

Darkly a mortal age has come and gone
And man grown ancient in a single year.
August! The summer month is blasted sere
With memories earth bleeds to dream upon.

To dream upon! Ah, were we dreaming then
Ere Europe, blindfold, lulled in holiday,
Harkened the sudden thunder through her play
And fumbling held her breath to hark again,

Or is this blighted year our dream?—How swift
The blackening tempest fell! How vast, through fire
And cloud of Belgium's rape, a planet's ire
Flared on that pall of shame, while through the rift

The livid sorrows racked our sympathies!
For still thought burned unclouded: Right and wrong
Strove for the palm as in an epic song;
And so we poured our succor overseas,

Neutral in act but never in our souls,
Yet guarding the brave goal of peace. Till soon—
Slow-warping to the waning year's blind moon—
The tide ebbed back, and in the freezing shoals

We stared upon the dead—the dead, whose mothers
Suckled them still in dreams. Stark mid the stench

And yellow choke that reeked from shell and trench
They lay together there—mere boys, and brothers.

Were *these* the epic hosts of Wrong and Right
Whose clash had whirled us in their spirits' war?
These silent boys! What had they battled for
To lie such still bedfellows in the night?

Must breath of dying brothers wake the brass
That thrills the call to arms? Shall ghostly lips
Summon the living to the dark eclipse
And all their dearest shout to see them pass

Merely for this: That these who might have shared
A simple handclasp share a bloodied sod?—
So for a while we gazed and questioned God:
A haunted while: for dimly as we stared

Far off we heard the multitudinous cry
Of mangled Poland like a cry in sleep,
And Serbia fever-panting, and the deep
Half-breathed self-doubt of prisoned Germany,

And still far tidings blew, but that first spark
Of August splendor burned in them no more;
Pity and sorrow palled, and custom wore
A deeper callus and a blur more dark,

Till sudden—the *Lusitania!* Lightnings shot
The unhallowed message, and a shuddering fire
Leapt from our long-charred hearts—a glowing spire,
And Europe's sword swung nearer to the knot

That ties the bonds of peace. And now—And now
The summer steals again toward winter's sleep.
The reaping time draws near—ah, *what* to reap?
And spring, that lurks beyond, comes hither—how?

. . . . . .

Still, O my Country, while we may, look back!
The blighted year cries from the charnel grass:
Must breath of dying brothers wake the brass
That thrills the call to arms?—A blood-seared track

Leads backward to that other August day
Prowled by the still unglutted Minotaur;
But we, who watch to slay that beast of War,
Shall we hunt *him* or those he mangles?—Say:

For reason has its ire more just than hate;
Imagination has its master hour,
And pity its foil, and mother-love its power
Mightier than blood-lust and more obdurate.

My Country! poised in forward visioning,
With pity, love and reason let us pray
Our lives shall serve to cleanse this August day!—

. . . . . .

The summer wanes: the ploughman comes with spring.

TO THE KINGS

HARRY KEMP

When you've fulfilled the measure of your pride
And your starved honor has been satisfied,
Some plowman, driving deep his lusty share,
Will strike a skull to sunlight, unaware—
One naked skull to stare up at the sky
And shake your kingdoms with its irony!

THE TERRIBLE MEEK [1]

CHARLES RANN KENNEDY

I am a soldier.
I have been building kingdoms for twenty years.
I have never known another trade.
Soldiery, brutality, bloody murder, that's my business.
My hands are crimson with it.
That's empire, that's what empire means.

In the city I come from,
It is the chief concern of the people.

[1] Excerpt.

Building kingdoms, building rule, building empires.
They're proud of it.
Little children in the schools are drilled
In obedience to it.
They are brought up to reverence its symbols.
When they wave its standard above them
They shout, they leap, they make wild and joyful noises,
Like little wolves, like little brute beasts.
Children, *young* children! And parents encourage them!
They never feel ashamed;
They would be treated like lepers if they felt ashamed!
That's what lust for empire does to folks.
It springs from a subtle fear,
A peculiar kind of fear that they call courage!

So we go on building our kingdoms,
The kingdoms of this world.
We stretch out our hands, greedy, grasping, tyrannical,
We stretch out our hands to possess the earth.
Domination, power, glory, money, merchandise, luxury,
These are the things we aim at;
But what we really get is pest and famine,
Grudge labor, the enslaved hate of men and women,
Ghosts, dead and death-breathing ghosts
That haunt our lives forever!

Already our kingdoms are beginning to totter.
Possess the earth?
Why, we have lost it! We never did possess it!
We have lost both the earth and our own souls
In trying to possess it!
For the soul of the earth is man and the love of man,
And of them both we have made a despair and a desolation!

I tell you, my good woman, this dead son of yours,
Disfigured, shamed, spat upon,
Has built a kingdom this day that shall never die.
The living glory of him will forever rule it.
The earth is his and he made it.
He and his brothers have been moulding and making it
Through all the long ages.
They are the only ones
Who ever really can possess it.
Not the proud, not the idle, not the wealthy,

Not the vaunted empires of this world. . . . No!
Something has happened here upon this hill today,
Something that will shake all the empires and kingdoms
Of this world into the dust.
The earth is his, the earth is theirs, and they made it!
The meek, the terrible meek,
The fierce, agonizing meek,
Are about to enter in to their inheritance! . . .

CYNICS

RALPH CHEYNEY

Between old Pan and Pandemonium
Our lives hold all too little interlude.
Our day's bassoon, our blood's euphonium,
The old gods set the tone in the old, old feud.

Thin, flapping tatters on a line to dry
Between the walls of two grim tenements
With far away a handkerchief of sky . . .
Behold our triumphs, failures, ravishments!

Brief, casual notes dictated but unread,
Soon burdening the air less than a flower,
Our lives are published but unedited,
Dull testimonials to an ancient power.

We would change dreams to truth—gray sleep betrays us;
End war—our arms are held by greed and hate;
And build a new Atlantis—change dismays us.
We would reshape our lives—it is too late.

THE RED COUNTRY

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

In the red country
The sky flowers
All day.
Strange mechanical birds

With struts of wire and glazed wings
Cross the impassive sky
Which burgeons ever and again
With ephemeral, unfolding flowers,
White and yellow and brown,
That spread and dissolve.
And smaller rapid droning birds go by,
And bright metallic bees whose sting is death.

Behind the hills,
Behind the whispering woods whose leaves are falling
Yellow and red to cover the red clay,
Misshapen monsters squat with wide black maws
Gulping smoke and belching flame.
From the mirk reed beds of the age of coal,
Wallowing out of their sleep in the earlier slime,
They are resurrected and stagger forth to slay—
The prehistoric Beasts we thought were dead.
They are blinded with long sleep,
But men with clever weapons
Goad them to fresh pastures.
Beside still waters
They drink of blood and neigh a horrible laughter,
And their ponderous tread shakes happy cities down,
And the thresh of their flail-like tails
Makes acres smoulder and smoke
Blackened of golden harvest.

The Beasts are back,
And men, in their spreading shadow,
Inhale the odor of their nauseous breath.
Inebriate with it they fashion other gods
Than the gods of day-dream.
Of iron and steel are little images
Made of the Beasts.
And men rush forth and fling themselves for ritual
Before these gods, before the lumbering Beasts,—
And some make long obeisance.

Umber and violet flowers of the sky,
The sun, like a blazing Mars, clanks across the blue
And plucks you, to fashion into a nosegay
To offer Venus, his old-time paramour.
But now she shrinks

And pales
Like Cynthia, her more ascetic sister. . . .
Vulcan came to her arms in the grimy garb
Of toil, he smelt of the forge and the racketing workshop,
But not of blood.

And, if she smells of these flowers, they bubble ruby blood
That trickles between her fingers.

Yet is a dream flowing over the red country,
Yet is a light growing, for all the black furrows of the red country.
The machines are foe or friend
As the world desires.
The Beasts shall sleep again.
And in that sleep, when the land is twilight-still
And men take thought among the frozen waves of the dead,
The Sowers go forth once more,
Sowers of vision, sowers of the seed
Of peace or war.
Shall it be peace indeed?
Great shadowy figures moving from hill to hill
Of tangled bodies, with rhythmic stride and cowled averted head,
What do you sow with hands funereal—
New savages imperial—
Unthinking pomps for arrogant, witless men?
Or seed for the people in strong democracy?
What do you see
With your secret eyes, and sow for us, that we must reap again?

A CONSECRATION

JOHN MASEFIELD

Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged charioteers
Riding triumphantly laurelled to lap the fat of the years,
Rather the scorned—the rejected—the men hemmed in with the spears—

The men of the tattered battalion which fights till it dies,
Dazed with the dust of the battle, the din and the cries—
The men with the broken heads and the blood running into their eyes.

Not the be-medalled Commander, beloved of the throne,
Riding cock-horse to parade when the bugles are blown,
But the lads who carried the koppie and cannot be known.

Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load;

The sailor, the stoker of steamers, the man with the clout,
The chantyman bent at the halliards putting a tune to the shout,
The drowsy man at the wheel and the tired lookout.

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth—
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and the scum of the earth!

Theirs be the music, the color, the glory, the gold;
Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of mould.
Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the cold—
Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tale be told. Amen.

PROSPECT

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

War will not always be.
A time will surely come
When men will pause and say:
"In this, the fair today
Our minds can scarce believe
That our forefathers strove
As very beasts, in blood—
Contemned the way of love!
The world took up the sword
And bathed the land in gore;
At one fell, fateful word
Our nation grimly swore
To give its gold, its life,
In never ceasing strife
To slay its haughty foe!—
  But that was long ago."

And other men will say:
"Yes, 'twas a bloody tale—
More ghastly none can know—
  But that was long ago."

LUCIFER'S FEAST

A European Nightmare

ALFRED NOYES

To celebrate the ascent of man, one gorgeous night
Lucifer gave a feast.
Its world-bewildering light
Danced in Belshazzar's tomb, and the old kings dead and gone
Felt their dust creep to jewels in crumbling Babylon.

Two nations were His guests—the top and flower of Time,
The forefront of an age which now had learned to climb
The slopes where Newton knelt, the heights that Shakespeare trod,
The mountains whence Beethoven rolled the voice of God.

Lucifer's feasting-lamps were like the morning stars,
But at the board-head shone the blood-red lamp of Mars.

League upon glittering league, white front and flabby face
Bent o'er the groaning board. Twelve brave men droned the grace;
But with instinctive tact, in courtesy to their Host,
Omitted God the Son and God the Holy Ghost,
And to the God of Battles raised their humble prayers.
Then, then, like thunder, all the guests drew up their chairs.
By each a drinking-cup, yellow, almost, as gold
(The blue eye-sockets gave the thumbs a good firm hold),
Adorned the flowery board. Could even brave men shrink?

Why if the cups were skulls, they had red wine to drink!
And had not each a napkin, white and peaked and proud,
Waiting to wipe his mouth? A napkin? Nay, a shroud!
This was a giant's feast, on hell's imperial scale.
The blades glistened.
The shrouds—O, in one snowy gale,
The pink hands fluttered them out, and spread them on their knees.
Who knew what gouts might drop, what filthy flakes of grease,
Now that o'er every shoulder, through the coiling steam,
Inhuman faces peered, with wolfish eyes a-gleam,
And gray-faced vampire Lusts that whinneyed in each ear
Hints of the hideous courses?
None may name them here?
None? And we may not see! The distant cauldrons cloak

The lava-coloured plains with clouds of umber smoke.
Nay, by that shrapnel-light, by those wild shooting stars
That rip the clouds away with fiercer fire than Mars,
They are painted sharp as death. If these can eat and drink
Chatter and laugh and rattle their knives, why should we shrink
From empty names? We know those ghostly gleams are true:
Why should Christ cry again—*They know not what they do?*
They, heirs of all the ages, sons of Shakespeare's land,
They, brothers of Beethoven, smiling, cultured, bland,
Whisper with sidling heads to ghouls with bloody lips.

Each takes upon his plate a small round thing that drips
And quivers, a child's heart.

Miles on miles
The glittering table bends o'er that first course, and smiles;
For, through the wreaths of smoke, the grey Lusts bear aloft
The second course, on leaden chargers, large and soft,
Bodies of women, steaming in an opal mist,
Red-branded here and there where vampire-teeth have kissed,
But white as pig's flesh, newly killed, and cleanly dressed,
A lemon in each mouth and roses round each breast,
Emblems to show how deeply, sweetly satisfied,
The breasts, the lips, can sleep, whose children fought and died
For—what? For country? God, once more Thy shrapnel-light!

Let those dark slaughter-houses burst upon our sight,
These kitchens are too clean, too near the tiring room!
Let Thy white shrapnel rend those filthier veils of gloom,
Rip the last fogs away and strip the foul thing bare!
One lightning-picture—see—yon bayonet-bristling square
Mown down, mown down, mown down, wild swathes of crimson wheat,
The white-eyed charge, the blast, the terrible retreat,
The blood-greased wheels of cannon thundering into line
O'er that red writhe of pain, rent groin and shattered spine,
The moaning face-less face that killed its child last night,
The raw pulp of the heart that beat for love's delight,
The heap of twisting bodies, clotted and congealed
In one red huddle of anguish on the loathesome field,
The seas of obscene slaughter spewing their blood-red yeast,
Multitudes pouring out their entrails for the feast,
Knowing not why, but dying, they think, for some high cause,
Dying for "hearth and home," their flags, their creeds, their laws.

Ask of the Bulls and Bears, ask if they understand
How both great grappling armies bleed for their own land;
For in that faith they die! These hoodwinked thousands die
Simply as heroes, gulled by hell's profoundest lie.
Who keeps the slaughter house? Not these, not these who gain
Nought but the sergeant's shilling and the homeless pain!
Who pulls the ropes? Not these, who buy their crust of bread
With the salt sweat of labour! These but bury their dead
Then sweat again for food!

Christ, is the hour not come,
To send forth one great voice and strike this dark hell dumb,
A voice to out-crash the cannon, one united cry
To sweep these wild-beast standards down that stain the sky,
To hurl these Lions and Bears and Eagles to their doom,
One voice, one heart, one soul, one fire that shall consume
The last red reeking shreds that flicker against the blast
And purge the Augean stalls we call "our glorious past"!
One voice from dawn to sunset, one almighty voice,
Full-throated as the sea—ye sons o' the earth, rejoice!
Beneath the all-loving sky, confederate kings ye stand,
Fling open wide the gates o' the world-wide Fatherland!

. . . . . .

Poor fools, we dare not dream it! We that pule and whine
Of art and science, we, whose great souls leave no shrine
Unshattered, we that climb the Sinai Shakespeare trod,
The Olivets where Beethoven walked and talked with God,
We that have weighed the stars and reined the lightning, we
That stare thro' heaven and plant our footsteps in the sea,
We, whose great souls have risen so far above the creeds
That we can jest at Christ and leave Him where he bleeds,
A legend of the dark, a tale so false or true
That howsoe'er we jest at Him, the jest sounds new.
(Our wearied dinner-tables never tire of that!
Let the clown sport with Christ, never the jest falls flat!)
Poor fools, we dare not dream a dream so strange, so great,
As on this ball of dust to found one "world-wide state,"
To float one common flag above our little lands,
And ere our little sun grows cold to clasp our hands
In friendship for a moment! . . .

SÆCLA FERARUM

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

. . . . . .

O never think that all of life is vain,—
Though towns be built on dead-men's bones in mud,
And fields, even when they best put forth their grain,
Be curst, as fertile but with dead-men's blood—
Yes, though still issue from the Mountain Door
The unborn generations to be slain,
With unknown flags and engines for new war,
Till self-destroyed, on coast and hill and plain,
Mankind with town and harvest is no more! . . .
O never think that life thereby has ceased:
Eating and drinking and the will to strive
(And sleep by rock and rainbow after feast)
And the great thrill of being here alive,
Will yet remain in birth succeeding birth,
With trails still open from the north and east,
All up and down this goodly frame, the earth—
Will yet remain in fish and fowl and beast! . . .

And lo, the Beasts, not only wake in Man
Hope for the Life-force still, beyond the span;
But offer him, before he sink and cease,
New life his own and intervals of peace.
Nay more than Egypt's Cult and India's Kine,
The animals may vouch us the Divine;
And Man may yet outwit his doom forecast—
Even by becoming one with them at last! . . .

. . . . . .

When the Field Gray defiled through Brussels town,
What did the Bear devise on flopping down?
When Lusitania sank, was the Raccoon
Dreaming of fish in tree-top under moon?
When Bayonets plunged (so skillfully withdrawn),
What felt the Tiger with his tooth in Fawn?
When man's four limbs convolved in pain and hate,
What felt the Octopus through all his eight,
Cast on the beach by tidal wave at dawn?

What felt the Mole, the blind and blindly led,
Burrowing with paws and ridging earth with head?
What felt the Hawk who, in the clouded night,
Swooped to the pinfold by the window-light?
Or Shark on back, with lower jaw agape—
That chinless jaw, on top and toothed for rape? . . .
What sense, where limbs stumped on without their toes,
As Caterpillar's feet on stem or rose?
Where hands were claws and hooks (not made but born),
And lips were lengthened into beaks of horn? . . .
When lightning cried the slain from land to land,
What mused the Turtle rounding out the sand?
When boys and girls on Volga starved and Rhine,
What smelt Rhinoceros and Porcupine?
When the Four Sages under Mirrors sat,
What pow-wows were the Jackals, Buzzards, at? . . .
Huge as the monster Tank that lately rose
Like Dinosaur from mud of fen and flat,
The Elephant erects his trunk and blows;
Is it his joy in Man which causes that,
Or a straw tickling half-way up his nose? . . .
What secrets in the purring of a Cat?
The cooing of the Dove, the shriek of Jay?
Or scream of Sea-Lion, tumbling flapper-finned?—
The air is full of sounds, besides the wind. . . .

V

WAR'S HARVEST

REMORSE

Siegfried Sassoon

Lost in the swamp and welter of the pit,
He flounders off the duck-boards; only he knows
Each flash and spouting crash,—each instant lit
When gloom reveals the streaming rain. He goes
Heavily, blindly on. And, while he blunders,
"Could anything be worse than this!"—he wonders,
Remembering how he saw those Germans run,
Screaming for mercy among the stumps of trees:
Green-faced, they dodged and darted: there was one
Livid with terror, clutching at his knees. . . .
Our chaps were sticking them like pigs. . . . "O hell!"
He thought—"there's things in war one dare not tell
Poor father sitting safe at home, who reads
Of dying heroes and their deathless deeds!"

THE DEAD-BEAT

Wilfred Owen

He dropped,—more sullenly than wearily,
Lay stupid like a cod, heavy like meat,
And none of us could kick him to his feet;
Just blinked at my revolver, blearily;
Didn't appear to know a war was on,
Or see the blasted trench at which he stared.
"I'll do 'em in," he whined, "if this hand's spared,
I'll murder them, I will."

A low voice said,
"It's blighty, p'raps, he sees; his pluck's all gone,
Dreaming of all the valiant, that aren't dead:
Bold uncles, smiling ministerially;
Maybe his brave young wife, getting her fun
In some new home, improved materially.
It's not these stiffs have crazed him; nor the Hun."

We sent him down at last, out of the way.
Unwounded;—stout lad, too, before that strafe.
Malingering? Stretcher-bearers winked, "Not half!"

Next day I heard the Doc's well-whiskied laugh:
"That scum you sent last night soon died. Hooray!"

THE REAR-GUARD

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,
He winked his prying torch with patching glare
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know,
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;
And he, exploring fifty feet below
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.

Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw someone lie
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.
"I'm looking for headquarters." No reply.
"God blast your neck!" (For days he'd had no sleep.)
"Get up and guide me through this stinking place!"

Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,
And flashed his beam across the livid face
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore
Agony dying hard ten days before;
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.

Alone he staggered on until he found
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.
At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

THE SENTRY

WILFRED OWEN

We'd found an old Boche dug-out, and he knew,
And gave us hell, for shell on frantic shell
Hammered on top, but never quite burst through.
Rain, guttering down in waterfalls of slime
Kept slush waist high, that rising hour by hour,
Choked up the steps too thick with clay to climb.
What murk of air remained stank old, and sour
With fumes of whizz-bangs, and the smell of men
Who'd lived there years, and left their curse in the den,
If not their corpses. . . .
There we herded from the blast
Of whizz-bangs, but one found our door at last.
Buffeting eyes and breath, snuffing the candles.
And thud! flump! thud! down the steep steps came thumping
And splashing in the flood, deluging muck—
The sentry's body; then his rifle, handles
Of old Boche bombs, and mud in ruck on ruck.
We dredged him up, for killed, until he whined
"O sir, my eyes—I'm blind—I'm blind, I'm blind!"
Coaxing, I held a flame against his lids
And said if he could see the least blurred light
He was not blind; in time he'd get all right.
"I can't," he sobbed. Eyeballs, huge-bulged like squids
Watch my dreams still; but I forgot him there
In posting next for duty, and sending a scout
To beg a stretcher somewhere, and floundering about
To other posts under the shrieking air.

Those other wretches, how they bled and spewed,
And one who would have drowned himself for good,—
I try not to remember these things now.
Let dread hark back for one word only: how
Half-listening to that sentry's moans and jumps,
And the wild chattering of his broken teeth,
Renewed most horribly whenever crumps
Pummelled the roof and slogged the air beneath—
Through the dense din, I say, we heard him shout
"I see your lights!" But ours had long died out.

THE MESSAGES

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

"I cannot quite remember. . . . There were five
Dropt dead beside me in the trench—and three
Whispered their dying messages to me. . . ."

Back from the trenches, more dead than alive,
Stone-deaf and dazed, and with a broken knee,
He hobbled slowly, muttering vacantly:

"I cannot quite remember. . . . There were five
Dropt dead beside me in the trench, and three
Whispered their dying messages to me. . . .

"Their friends are waiting, wondering how they thrive—
Waiting a word in silence patiently. . . .
But what they said, or who their friends may be

"I cannot quite remember. . . . There were five
Dropt dead beside me in the trench—and three
Whispered their dying messages to me. . . ."

BEGGAR BILL

WALTER HENDRICKS

Shrapnel would have burst his head
If he had turned. And he'd be dead.
And we'd be hewing out his name,
And he'd have won eternal fame,
Because a chance, but kindly, shell
Blew his body all to hell.

Instead it only racked his brains,
And left him to endure his pains,
To starve, and suffer in the cold,
And beg his way while growing old,
And made to meet the doubting eye
Of luckier fellows passing by.

"Confounded luck," you'll hear him say,
"Had I but turned my head that day!"

IN THE AMBULANCE

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

"Two rows of cabbages,
  Two of curly-greens,
Two rows of early peas,
  Two of kidney beans."

That's what he is muttering,
  Making such a song,
Keeping other chaps awake,
  The whole night long.

Both his legs are shot away,
  And his head is light;
So he keeps on muttering
  All the blessed night:

"Two rows of cabbages,
  Two of curly-greens,
Two rows of early peas,
  Two of kidney beans."

PSYCHONEUROSES

CHARLES DIVINE

The train sped through a tranquil countryside
Where sheep, that day, had grazed across the grass
With easy progress through the autumn sun.
Eight sprawling men lay in the small compartment
And dozed past fitful lurch and waking pain.

The night is grinding through my head,
  Flat wheel, jolt and jar,
Banging at my temples hot,
  Stinging needles, creaking car;
Jim's dizzy face, a blot—
  And the quiet fields so far!

I know the doctors call us "Nuts"—
  Oh, yes, I heard them say—

We're off for special treatment . . . well,
I'll tell 'em 'bout the day
Artillery was falling short
And we pushed in the way.

Eight sprawling men lay in the small compartment,
Who jumped at every sudden roar and whistle
Flung past them by the brutal, leaping night.
The blue-globed lamp was dim and green and ghastly,
And greasy shadows crossed each twisted face.

There's Harry, nerves all gone, all gone—
Was that a station bell?—
His hands are shaking all the time—
I hope they make us well—
He hides his fists inside his coat,
But the trembling pockets tell.

And Jim is worse than him, poor lad,
He can't talk any more,
The shells have left him speechless
And—Good God, don't slam that door!—
The sheep we passed this afternoon,
They never heard of war.

Dick shouts to start a new attack,
He says he's Colonel Dash.
Don't let him grab that can of beef,
He'll break—*a sudden crash!*
The pounding blackness rushes in
Above the broken sash.

The night rides grinding through my head,
Flat wheel, jolt and jar,
Banging at my temples hot—
And the quiet fields so far!

SURVIVORS

Siegfried Sassoon

No doubt they'll soon get well; the shock and strain
Have caused their stammering, disconnected talk.
Of course they're "longing to go out again,"—
These boys with old, scared faces, learning to walk.

They'll soon forget their haunted nights; their cowed
  Subjection to the ghosts of friends who died,—
Their dreams that drip with murder; and they'll be proud
  Of glorious war that shattered all their pride. . . .
Men who went out to battle, grim and glad;
Children, with eyes that hate you, broken and mad.

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

WILFRED OWEN

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime—
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs
Bitten as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old LIE: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori!

THE CAMP-FOLLOWER

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

We spoke, the camp-follower and I.
About us was a cold, pungent odor—
Gun-powder, stale wine, wet earth, and the smell of thousands of men.
She said it reminded her of the scent
In the house of prostitutes she had lived in.
About us were soldiers—hordes of scarlet women, stupidly, smilingly giving up their bodies
To a putrid-lipped, chuckling lover—Death;
While their mistress in tinsel whipped them on. . . .
She spoke of a woman she had known in Odessa,
Owner of a huge band of girls,
Who had pocketed their earnings for years,
Only to be used, swindled and killed by some nobleman. . . .
She said she thought of this grinning woman
Whenever she saw an officer brought back from battle, dead. . . .
And I sat beside her and wondered.

THEY

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

The Bishop tells us: "When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
In a just cause: they led the last attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honorable race.
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face."

"We're none of us the same!" the boys reply.
"For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert's gone syphilitic. You'll not find
A chap who's served that hasn't found *some* change."
And the Bishop said: "The ways of God are strange!"

EYELESS AND LIMBLESS AND SHATTERED

From "Charing Cross"

CECIL ROBERTS

And here is the end of it all, and we count the loss
Recording the glory, forgetting this human refuse
Left by extravagant war—borne away in the night
Swiftly and silently. God! here again at a cross
Crucified man in a dark world dies; the sight
Burns to the brain, and I cry, as once One cried—
"My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?"—then
I watch with dumb anguish the endless procession of men,
The remnants picked up from the waste in the fields: they who died
Flow no more in the stream, they can rest; and only it matters
That Science should skilfully mend what it skilfully shatters.

DISABLED

WILFRED OWEN

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
Voices of play and pleasure after day,
Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay
When glow-lamps budded in the light-blue trees
And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,
—In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
Now he will never feel again how slim
Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands,
All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
For it was younger than his youth, last year.
Now he is old; his back will never brace;
He's lost his colour very far from here,

Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.
One time he liked a bloodsmear down his leg,
After the matches carried shoulder-high.
It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
He thought he'd better join. He wonders why . . .
Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts.

That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,
Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts,
He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;
Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen years.
Germans he scarcely thought of; and no fears
Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.
Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise,
And take whatever pity they may dole.
To-night he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold and late it is! Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

DOES IT MATTER?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Does it matter?—losing your leg . . .
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter?—losing your sight? . . .
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter?—those dreams from the pit?
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your country,
And no one will worry a bit.

A TERRE

Being the Philosophy of Many Soldiers

WILFRED OWEN

Sit on the bed; I'm blind, and three parts shell,
Be careful; can't shake hands now; never shall.
Both arms have mutinied against me—brutes.
My fingers fidget like ten idle brats.

I tried to peg out soldierly—no use!
One dies of war like any old disease.
This bandage feels like pennies on my eyes.
I have my medals?—Discs to make eyes close.
My glorious ribbons?—Ripped from my own back
In scarlet shreds. (That's for your poetry book.)

A short life and a merry one, my brick!
We used to say we'd hate to live dead old,—
Yet now . . . I'd willingly be puffy, bald,
And patriotic. Buffers catch from boys
At least the jokes hurled at them. I suppose
Little I'd ever teach a son, but hitting,
Shooting, war, hunting, all the arts of hurting.
Well, that's what I learnt,—that, and making money.
Your fifty years ahead seem none too many?
Tell me how long I've got? God! For one year
To help myself to nothing more than air!
One Spring! Is one too good to spare, too long?
Spring wind would work its own way to my lung,
And grow me legs as quick as lilac-shoots.
My servant's lamed, but listen how he shouts!

When I'm lugged out, he'll still be good for that.
Here in this mummy-case, you know, I've thought
How well I might have swept his floors for ever,
I'd ask no night off when the bustle's over,
Enjoying so the dirt. Who's prejudiced
Against a grimed hand when his own's quite dust,
Less live than specks that in the sun-shafts turn,
Less warm than dust that mixes with arms' tan?
I'd love to be a sweep, now, black as Town,
Yes, or a muckman. Must I be his load?

O Life, Life, let me breathe,—a dug-out rat!
Not worse than ours the existences rats lead—
Nosing along at night down some safe vat,
They find a shell-proof home before they rot.
Dead men may envy living mites in cheese,
Or good germs even. Microbes have their joys,
And subdivide, and never come to death,
Certainly flowers have the easiest time on earth.
"I shall be one with nature, herb, and stone."
Shelley would tell me. Shelley would be stunned;
The dullest Tommy hugs that fancy now.
"Pushing up daisies," is their creed, you know.
To grain, then, go my fat, so buds my sap,
For all the usefulness there is in soap.
D'you think the Boche will ever stew man-soup?
Some day, no doubt, if . . .
Friend, be very sure
I shall be better off with plants that share
More peaceably the meadow and the shower.
Soft rains will touch me,—as they could touch once,
And nothing but the sun shall make me ware.
Your guns may crash around me. I'll not hear;
Or, if I wince, I shall not know I wince.
Don't take my soul's poor comfort for your jest.
Soldiers may grow a soul when turned to fronds,
But here the thing's best left at home with friends.

My soul's a little grief, grappling your chest,
To climb your throat on sobs; easily chased
On other sighs and wiped by fresher winds.

Carry my crying spirit till it's weaned
To do without what blood remained these wounds.

GOD'S CHALLENGERS

Written after a Visit to a Soldiers' Hospital

MARION PERHAM GALE

Today, I have seen
Mute ghosts of men,
Shaking,
Forever shaking;
Heard grown men's tongues
A children's Babel making;
Felt the cold sweat
On trembling giant hands,
As to my own they clung;
Have looked into eyes,
Glazed as cold pottery,
Eyes, dim as lanterns
In a garden strung,
Their lights most flickered out,
Yet, swaying,
Forever swaying.
I have seen smiles
Burn on a hollow cheek
Down to a dry aped grin;
Tears, welling from
Great monster dams
Built doggedly within.
I have seen men,
Not blind,
Yet, searching,
Forever searching
For something they can not find;
Men who have done big things,
Alas, content,
To go the useless way
Their feet are sent.

These are the mothers' sons
Who fought
"To make the world
Safe for Democracy,"
These are the men
Who, silent, tread
The stony road
To Calvary.

Go look at them,
I say,
To you, and you, and you!
The truth is known
By, oh, so few!

These are the boys
We sent to War.
God's challengers
Asking,
Forever asking,
What did we do it for?

MENTAL CASES

WILFRED OWEN

Who are these? Why sit they here in twilight?
Wherefore rock they, purgatorial shadows,
Drooping tongues from jaws that slob their relish,
Baring teeth that leer like skulls' tongues wicked?
Stroke on stroke of pain,—but what slow panic,
Gouged these chasms round their fretted sockets?
Ever from their hair and through their hand palms
Misery swelters. Surely we have perished
Sleeping, and walk hell; but who these hellish?

—These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.
Memory fingers in their hair of murders,
Multitudinous murders they once witnessed.
Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander,
Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter.
Always they must see these things and hear them,
Batter of guns and shatter of flying muscles,
Carnage incomparable and human squander
Rucked too thick for these men's extrication.

Therefore still their eyeballs shrink tormented
Back into their brains, because on their sense
Sunlight seems a bloodsmear; night comes blood-black;
Dawn breaks open like a wound that bleeds afresh
—Thus their heads wear this hilarious, hideous,
Awful falseness of set-smiling corpses.

—Thus their hands are plucking at each other;
Picking at the rope-knouts of their scourging;
Snatching after us who smote them, brother,
Pawing us who dealt them war and madness.

BAL MASQUE: 1915

M. C. Sinclair

The sabres sing, the deep-bass guns resound,
And Death is host, and Flesh is meeting-ground
For shot and shell and bayonet and sword.
A horde of allied men, a German horde,
With salutations loud, join in the rout;
The Serbs engage the Austrians in a bout;
The Prussians with the Russians dance a "glide";
And black-skinned men, with nostrils flat and wide,
Dance "grizzly bear," or maybe "Hottentot."
The French and English waltz, the Turkeys "trot";
The scouting Birdmen do a minuet
Among the Angels guarding heaven's dome.
"Salute your partners! Give the bayonet!"
Till up from Hell a Voice commands: *"Come home!"*

A VICTORY DANCE

Alfred Noyes

The cymbals crash,
And the dancers walk,
With long silk stockings
And arms of chalk,
Butterfly skirts,
And white breasts bare,
And shadows of dead men
Watching 'em there.

Shadows of dead men
Stand by the wall,
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball.

They do not reproach,
Because they know,
If they're forgotten,
It's better so.

Under the dancing
Feet are the graves.
Dazzle and motley,
In long bright waves,
Brushed by the palm-fronds
Grapple and whirl
Ox-eyed matron,
And slim white girl.

Fat wet bodies
Go waddling by,
Girdled with satin,
Though God knows why;
Gripped by satyrs
In white and black,
With a fat wet hand
On the fat wet back.

See, there is one child
Fresh from school,
Learning the ropes
As the old hands rule.
God, how that dead boy
Gapes and grins
As the tom-toms bang
And the shimmy begins.

"What did you think
We should find," said a shade,
"When the last shot echoed
And peace was made?"
"Christ," laughed the fleshless
Jaws of his friend,
"I thought they'd be praying
For worlds to mend,

"Making earth better
Or something silly,
Like white-washing hell
Or Picca-dam-dilly.

They've a sense of humour,
  These women of ours,
These exquisite lilies,
  These fresh young flowers!"

"Pish!" said a statesman
  Standing near,
"I'm glad they can busy
  Their thoughts elsewhere!
We mustn't reproach 'em,
  They're young, you see!"
"Ah," said the dead men,
  "So were we!"

Victory! Victory!
  On with the dance!
Back to the jungle
  The new beasts prance!
God how the dead men
  Grin by the wall,
Watching the fun
  Of the Victory Ball.

VI

SPRING IN WAR TIME

SPRING IN WAR TIME

SARA TEASDALE

I feel the Spring far off, far off,
  The faint, far scent of bud and leaf—
Oh, how can Spring take heart to come
  To a world in grief,
    Deep grief?

The sun turns north, the days grow long,
  Later the evening star grows bright—
How can the daylight linger on
  For men to fight,
    Still fight?

The grass is waking in the ground,
  Soon it will rise and blow in waves—
How can it have the heart to sway
  Over the graves,
    New graves?

Under the boughs where lovers walked
  The apple-blooms will shed their breath—
But what of all the lovers now
  Parted by Death,
    Gray Death?

THE RAGGED STONE

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

As I was walking with my dear, my dear come back at last,
The shadow of the Ragged Stone fell on us as we passed:

And if the tale be true they tell about the Ragged Stone
I'll not be walking with my dear next year, nor yet alone.

And we're to wed come Michaelmas, my lovely dear and I,
And we're to have a little house, and do not want to die.

But all the folk are fighting in the lands across the sea,
Because the King and counsellors went mad in Germany.

Because the King and counsellors went mad, my love and I
May never have a little house before we come to die.

And if the tale be true they tell about the Ragged Stone
I'll not be walking with my dear next year, nor yet alone.

LOVE AND YOUTH AND WAR

Derrick Norman Lehmer

Love and youth to the war they sent,
Love with his soft eyes backward bent,
Youth with his eyes that forward burn,
War is the trade for such to learn.

Ho, men of murder! Train them straight;
Teach them your songs of lust and hate!
Love and youth are childish things,
Train them to do the work of kings!

Murder and pillage, wreck and burn;
This is the work that they must learn.
Crush the world with an iron hand;
This is the thing they must understand.

Kings and rulers, tell the truth;
What have you done with Love and Youth?
How will you dare to stand in the sun
When Love and Youth to the war have gone?

IF WAR BE KIND

Stephen Crane

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, and his kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

. . . . . .

Mother, whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright, splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

NOT TO KEEP

ROBERT FROST

They sent him back to her. The letter came
Saying . . . and she could have him. And before
She could be sure there was no hidden ill
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight—
Living. They gave him back to her alive—
How else? They are not known to send the dead—
And not disfigured visibly. His face?
His hands? She had to look—to ask,
"What was it, dear?" And she had given all
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,
And all the rest for them permissible ease.
She had to ask, "What was it, dear?"

"Enough,
Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care
And medicine and rest—and you a week,
Can cure me of to do again." The same
Grim giving to do over for them both.
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes
How was it with him for a second trial.
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.

WAR

GRACE ELLERY CHANNING-STETSON

The great Republic goes to war,
But spring still comes as spring has done,
And all the summer months will run
Their summer sequence as before;
And every bird will build its nest,
The sun sink daily in the west,
And rising eastward bring new day
In the old way.

But ah! those dawns will have a light,
Those western skies burn golden bright,
With what a note the birds will sing,
And winter's self be turned to spring
Than any springtime sweeter far,
When once again, calm entering,
The great Republic comes from war!

THE LAUGHTERS

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Spring!
And her hidden bugles up the street.
Spring—and the sweet
Laughter of winds at the crossing;
Laughter of birds and a fountain tossing
Its hair in abandoned ecstasies.
Laughter of trees.
Laughter of shop-girls that giggle and blush;
Laughter of the tug-boat's impertinent fife.
Laughter followed by a trembling hush—
Laughter of love, scarce whispered aloud.
Then, stilled by no sacredness or strife,
Laughter that leaps from the crowd;
Seizing the world in a rush.
Laughter of life. . . .

Earth takes her deep breaths like a man who had feared he might
smother,
Filling his lungs before bursting into a shout. . . .
Windows are opened—curtains flying out;
Over the washlines women call to each other.
And, under the calling, there surges, too clearly to doubt,
Spring, with the noises
Of shrill, little voices;
Joining in "Tag" and the furious chase
Of "I-spy," "Red Rover" and "Prisoner's Base";
Of the roller-skates' whir at the sidewalk's slope,
Of boys playing marbles and the girls skipping rope.
And there, down the avenue, behold,
The first true herald of the Spring—
The hand-organ gasping and wheezily murmuring
Its tunes ten years old. . . .
And the music, trivial and tawdry, has freshness and magical
swing.
And over and under it,
During and after—
The laughter
Of Spring! . . .

And lifted still
With the common thrill,
With the throbbing air, the tingling vapor,
That rose like strong and mingled wines;
I turn to my paper,
And read these lines:
"Now that the Spring is here,
The war enters its bloodiest phase. . . .
The men are impatient. . . .
Bad roads, storms and the rigors of the winter
Have held back the contending armies. . . .
But the recruits have arrived.
And are waiting only the first days of warm weather. . . .
There will be terrible fighting along the whole line—
Now that Spring has come."
I put the paper down.
Something struck out the sun—something unseen;
Something arose like a dark wave to drown
The golden streets with sickly green.
Something polluted the blossoming day
With the touch of decay.

The music thinned and died;
People seemed hollow-eyed.
Even the faces of children, where gaiety lingers,
Sagged and drooped like banners about to be furled—
And Silence laid its bony fingers
On the lips of the world. . . .
A grisly quiet with the power to choke;
A quiet that only one thing broke;
One thing that alone rose up thereafter. . . .
Laughter!
Laughter of streams running red.
Laughter of evil things in the night;
Vultures carousing over the dead;
Laughter of ghouls.
Chuckling of idiots, cursed with the sight.
Laughter of dark and horrible pools.
Scream of the bullets' rattling mirth,
Sweeping the earth.
Laughter of the cannon's poisonous breath. . . .
And over the shouts and the wreckage and crumbling
The raucous and rumbling
Laughter of death.
Death that arises to sing,—
Hailing the Spring!

UPON THE WINDS OF SPRING

M. C. Sinclair

I feel the terror in the world tonight—
  Unbridled lust of power, and bridled lust
  More cold but no less merciless. The dust
Of perished legions drifts upon the bright
  And tender winds of spring, a seal, blood-red,
Upon man's last insanity. Surcease
Of war? Ah, so they thought! To purchase peace
  For aye, with their young blood! Ah, so they said!

But peace is not upon the winds of spring.
  The nostrils of new wars flare wide, and sniff
The dust of heroes greedily, and fling
  An evil breath upon the world—and if
I chance to laugh because the spring is here,
Pain stabs my heart and binds the wound with fear!

1915

JAMES OPPENHEIM

Hang the hills with black,
And blacken the early violets with the blood of the young:
What want we with a Spring of fragrant farmlands,
Gardens, smokes of the brush,
And healing rains?
Let the birds, the winds and the sea
Sing no more the loves of mating, and the marriage chants of Spring.
But mournfully pipe dirges of broad-cast tragic death.

What want we with Spring?
We have cast in roaring foundries the dark-bored steel,
And like gods have snatched the chemical might of the earth,
And devised a killing and a crime. . . .

Out of the murder of our hearts, we have wrought great havoc. . . .
Sinking ships at sea, and the toppling of cities,
And the mowing of living hosts!
What want we with the Spring?

Patiently the millions wrought:
With sacrificial hands, and suffering vision,
Chaos became a city, a ship, a school . . .

Up was lifted the child, and the young mind scrutinized
That not a life might be lost. . . .
How unfold these buds? how grow these possibilities?

Steadily the gates of pain were battered,
And the gates of darkness assailed,
And the waste of the spirit striven with.

And the young went forth crying: Spring! Spring!
Hope dawns! A glory!
We are shaping a marvel in the skies!
Man becomes god: this is the morning and the first day of Creation!

Spring?
The hosts contend together:

Cities are become dust-heaps:
The young god, the Creator,
Has turned fury and fiend, the Destroyer. . . .

Strange sowing of seed goes on:
This is the year when we sow the Earth with the flesh of the young men. . . .

Black! black! black!
We have blasted away in a day,
Our own children,
Our own creation . . .

We have gone mad, killing the young,
Slaying the hope of the world . . .
Now youth leaves his dream and his toil and his quickening love
To kill or to die. . . .
O short-lived generation!
Debauch of blood!
Folly and sin!

No more of it!
Take away Spring, and give over the planet to a moon's death, a frozen death:

Our Earth deserves extinction,
With her rotten breed of men. . . .

So I cried, and in rage and grief went forth through the city,
The New-World City of Peace. . . .

I passed a prison . . .
Broken men decayed in the damp.
I passed a mill . . .
Children and pale women peering wistfully from the windows.
I passed a hospital . . .
Human wreckage sunned there beside the morgue.
I walked through the stinking slums . . .
Children nosed in the garbage.

Then I went to the home of a friend,
And found darkness . . .
Husband and wife were slowly slaying each other:
Slaying with love.

The woman whispered to me:
"God! Could I go to the war—go to the war and be killed!"

Then I looked in my own breast,
And I said: What war is this I am bitter against?
Behold, the lyddite of my soul that destroys peace about me,
Behold, the bayonet of my hate, and the shrapnel of my bestiality:
The contending armies of lusts and shames and intrigues:
The sentries of dark sins: the spies of despisal. . . .
In this little world of Self I saw the big:
In my own breast I found war and disaster and ship sinking,
The death of faith and of hope . . .
Behold, in myself I found Man:
Who since the beginning has been this advancing conflict . . .
Ever thus . . .

Then is it marvel no peace is on Earth?
Where is the Man of Peace?
Shall I be crushed then by the obvious horror of blood and carrion?
By wholesale carnage?
Dark in the world of darkness, I left the city:
And then I saw,
O ancient and new miracle . . .
Peerless, laughing at death, overruling decay,
Earth silently lifted life. . . .
Impassive and calm lay the heaps of the hills,
And steadily rising,
Green pierced through, and the soil steamed, and the birds nested.
There was the farmer-boy plowing,
And there the young wife airing the house,
And close to the handled mud the absorbed faces of children . . .
Lo, thought I, Earth holds to her hope!

Then I greeted the hills . . .
O let them be mantled with green, I said,
And let beauty hang from the boughs . . .
Increase the laughter of children,
String the cities with color and glory,
Lift a music . . .
Once were the heavens a blackness,
Then blazed a sun forth . . .
In the Earth's blackness, O tragic struggler, roll forth your splendid sun
Fight darkness with light,
Destruction with creation.

Have cities toppled and ships been sunk?
Build! Build!
Is youth slain?
Beget new children of flesh and toil:
Beget a new self of splendor. . . .
Have hopes died?
Kindle new ones. . . .
Has man fallen?
You, man, arise!

DAWN

Daniel Henderson

The hour of dawn is the hour of death—
I know by the gas in the morning's breath;
I know by the cannon's racking scream,
By the rifle's click, by the bayonet's gleam;
I know by our crouching, hushed platoon
That the word is neat, that the hour is soon
When we'll leap to the top with the shibboleth—
"The hour of dawn is the hour of death!"

The hour of dawn is the hour of life!
A new world springs from a world of strife!
A world uncursed by autocracy's brood;
A world of beauty and brotherhood;
A world made true to a holy plan—
The reign of love, the rule of Man!
It is hate and lust and war we knife—
The hour of dawn is the hour of life!

A NIGHTINGALE AT FRESNOY

Jessie B. Rittenhouse

Never, they say, were guns so loud,
Never were flames so bright,
As those that made at Fresnoy
Inferno of the night;

And when the searchlight fires lit
The slender, new-green trees,
They could be seen to tremble
As never in a breeze.

At Fresnoy, in the little wood
  Just greening with the spring,
A nightingale, undaunted,
  Lifted his voice to sing;

And in each moment's silence
  When torn earth held her breath,
Before the fearful guns again
  Uttered their Song of Death,—

The nightingale, oblivious
  Of all the ghastly strife,
Was heard within the little wood
  To sing the Song of Life!

BIRD O'ER THE BATTLEFIELD

Isabel Fiske Conant

Bird o'er the battlefield, singing in lull of the thunder,
What gave you song? Oh, be migrant; be fleet-winged and pass!
Though year to year you have mated and brooded hereunder,
Seek not your safety this spring in this blood-matted grass.

You that last Maytime sang unto the west and its glamor,
Speed while you may, while your wings are unwounded and strong.
Think you to nest in these trenches? This merciless clamor,
Think you to drown its least shrapnel with lyrical song?

Yet, if you stray, like an innocent child in a gutter,
Wounded are here, whose delirium shall hear you, and see
Brooks in the farms of their youth, and whose fever shall mutter
Name of a girl, of a mother, of Christ of the Tree.

What, spite of shrapnel and danger, has made you enraptured?
Seeing and hearing what man may not see and not hear?
Bird o'er the battlefield, what has your tiny heart captured?
Is it that Christ, walking storm-waves of trenches, comes near?

MAGPIES IN PICARDY

T. P. Cameron Wilson

The magpies in Picardy
Are more than I can tell.
They flicker down the dusty roads
And cast a magic spell
On the men who march through Picardy,
Through Picardy to Hell.

(The blackbird flies with panic,
The swallow goes like light,
The finches move like ladies,
The owl floats by at night;
But the great and flashing magpie
He flies as artists might.)

A magpie in Picardy
Told me secret things—
Of the music in white feathers,
And the sunlight that sings
And dances in deep shadows—
He told me with his wings.

(The hawk is cruel and rigid,
He watches from a height;
The rook is slow and sombre,
The robin loves to fight;
But the great and flashing magpie
He flies as lovers might.)

He told me that in Picardy,
An age ago or more,
While all his fathers still were eggs,
These dusty highways bore
Brown singing soldiers marching out
Through Picardy to war.

He said that still through chaos
Works on the ancient plan,
And things have altered not
Since first the world began—
The beauty of the wild green earth
And the bravery of man.

(For the sparrow flies unthinking
And quarrels in his flight;
The heron trails his legs behind,
The lark goes out of sight;
But the great and flashing magpie
He flies as poets might.)

A HILL IN PICARDY

CLINTON SCOLLARD

There is a little hill in Picardy
That, in the bygone days, was fair to see
With silvery leaves of the slim poplar tree.
Ah! lovely little hill in Picardy!

White were the boles as are a maiden's hands;
And there were willow-withes and hazel-wands,
And ferns, with frail antennæ of their fronds.
Ah! lovely little hill in Picardy!

And there the purple violets made spring
A dream of loveliness; many a tender thing—
Vervain and vetch—added its glamoring,
Ah! lovely little hill in Picardy!

And there was morn and vesper song of birds
Whereto the wind joined with its joyous words;
And there was kindly shade for the sleek herds,
Ah! lovely little hill in Picardy!

But now—but now—what is there left to see
Save desolation? Riven earth and tree
And lines of crosses tell their tale. Ah, me,
This lonely little hill in Picardy!

THE BATTLE-FIELDS

MAX EASTMAN

You never saw the summer dance and sing
And wreathe her steps with laughter, toss her larks,
And strew her crimson poppies, and make rise
Across the meadows in her train a cry
Of happy colors—O you never knew
How birds can make a business of their singing,

How the golden music can rain down
From sunny heaven like a hail-storm all
Day long—you never saw the abounding life
Of summer, till you saw her in her wrath
And gladness, young-eyed, golden-irised, loud
And wild and lovely-drunken, running, prancing,
Clambering across these fields of death.

Old pits and craters where the solid earth
Rocked up and smoked like water, are the beds
Of blowing lilies; sprawling piles of steel
The shucks and dead-ends of the work of death,
Are choirs for thrushes and gay trellises
For rose and morning-glory, and you see
The tissue petals trailing down the holes
Men huddled in to die like poisoned rats.

You see black crazy strings of barbed-wire fences
Legging down the hillside like old men
Amuck, tripped up and clambered on and loved
Down into earth by mountains of wild-grape
And ivy. And you see old obscene tanks,
Gigantic bugs without antennæ, bugs
Named Lottie, and named Liesel, cracked and blasted,
Pouring out their iron guts among
The daisies where the daisies rise and shine,
And long-tailed pies that fly like aeroplanes
Float from their turrets gentle in the blue.

Whole cities were sown in this earth like seed.
The wealth and eagerness of all mankind
Was here, like mountain thunder, coursing through
These ghostly paths that hie so privately
Beneath the glossy crowds of bee-loved clover.
They were here for murder—death conveyed them—
But the shepherd trails his eager sheep
To crop that clover, and the clicking hoe
And sliding shovel talk as glibly forth
As crickets when a summer storm is past.

These villages, close-nesting like the hives
Of bees, were crushed to blood and powder by
The speeding hoof of war. Their temples fallen
And their homes a pit for gravel, they,
The many neighbors, are a lonely few
Lost pioneers. But they have pitched their tents

And tacked their paper shanties in the desert,
And the hens are clucking, and the beans
Are blossoming with white and brick-red blossoms,
And the vine, the purple clematis,
Is royal at the door. On holidays
They lay their tools down, and with sunny wine
From the old cellar-pits, and sunny mirth
From depths incredible, they eat their bread
In laughter, they fling jokes at the old war,
And pour soup in the bugle, and sing loud,
And pound the drum, and call out all the girls,
And march, and dance, and fill the darkened streets
With love and music till the moon goes out.

In all death's garden but one plot is dead,
One cold-bleak acre swept up for our tears,
The turf, the pebbles, regular and still—
The tired white little crosses marking time.
But they are feeble, and their watch is brief.
To-day remembering a name, to-morrow
They will mourn the death of memory.
Another morrow they are gone. Time's wind
Has blown the sweet-briar roses over them.

Earth does not mind the madness of her children—
She has room. From one gaunt womb she could
Pour back those cities, and fill all these fields
With men and women aching at their toil,
And droll-faced children trudging with a pail
To greet them. This raw miracle of life
Is ruthless, reckless, sure. Plunge in your hands
To fashion it; be ruthless, reckless, sure.
Fear is the only danger. Death of dreams
Dreamed weakly is the only death of man.
The prayers sighed off and outward from the earth,
The songs that feed the poet with his wish,
Beatitudes tramped under armies, thoughts
Too mother-tender or too childish wise
To stand out in the weather of the world,
And deeds untimely kind, and deed-like words
Of love's apostles, who would pilgrim down
The black volcanic valley of all time
With hymns and waving palms, their sweet white banners
Lost and perishing like breath of brooks,
Like strings of thin mist when the mountains burn—

In them man's spirit in its power dies.
The rest is nature's life. And she will live—
She will stride on into the doomless future,
Slave to no thought softer than her own.

THE BLIND MAN

HERVEY ALLEN

At Nogent, on the river Marne,
I passed a burning house and barn.
I went into the public square
Where pigeons fluttered in the air
And empty windows gaped a-stare.

There crouched a Blindman by the wall
A-shivering in a ragged shawl,
Who gave a hopeless parrot screech
And felt the wall with halting reach.
He went around as in a trap,
He had a stick to feel and rap,
A-rap-a-tap, a-rap-a-tap.

I strode across the public square,
I stopped and spoke him full and fair,
I asked him what he searched for there.
Then came a look upon his face
That made me want to leave the place.
He could not answer for a space,
He moved his trembling hands about
And in-and-out, and in-and-out.

"Kind sir," he said, "I scarcely know—
A week ago there fell a blow—
I think it was a week ago,
I sent my little girl to school,
With kisses and her book and rule,
A week ago she went to school."
The pigeons all began to coo.
"A-cock-a-loo, a-cock-a-loo."

"O God! to be a blinded fool;
I cannot find the children's school—
The gate, the court about the pool—
But, sir, if you will guide my feet

Across the square and down the street,
I think I'll know then where it lies.
O Jesu! Give me back my eyes!
O Jesu! Give me back my eyes!"

I led him down the littered street,
He seemed to know it with his feet,
For suddenly he turned aside
And entered through a gateway wide.
It was the court about the pool.
Long shadows slept deep and cool.
No sound was there of beast or bird;
It was the silence that we heard.

"And this," he said, "might be the place,"
An eager look came on his face.
He raised his voice and gave a call;
An echo mewed along the wall,
And then it rose, and then it fell,
Like children talking down a well.
"Go in," he said, "see what you see,
And then come back again for me."

Like one who bears a weight of sin
And walks with fear, I entered in—
A turn—and halfway up the stair
There was a sight to raise your hair;
A dusty litter, books and toys,
Three bundles that were little boys,
White faces like an ivory gem;
A statue stood and looked at them.

So thick the silence where I stood,
I thought I wore a wooden hood;
The blood went whispering through my ears,
Like secrets that one overhears.
I looked upon the dead awhile;
I saw the gleaming statue smile.
The children slept so sweetly there,
I scarce believed the tainted air.

And then I heard the Blindman's stick,
As rhythmic as a watch's tick,
A step—a click, a step—a click—
As slow as days grow to a year,

So long it seemed while he drew near,
But sure and blind as death and fate,
He came and said, "I dared not wait,
It was too silent at the gate.

And tell me now, sir, what you see
That keeps you here so silently."
"Three harmless things," I said, "I fear,
Three things I see but cannot hear,
Three shadows of what was before,
Cast by no light are on the floor."
"Sir," said the Blindman, "lead me round,
Lest I should tread on holy ground."

Like men they lead at dawn to doom,
We slowly climbed the stairway's gloom
And came into a sunlit room.
The ceiling lay upon the floor,
And slates, and books, and something more—
The master with a glassy stare,
Sat gory in his shivered chair
And gazed upon his pupils there.

The Blindman grasped me eagerly.
"And tell me now, sir, what you see?
This is the place where she should be—
My Eleanor, who used to wear
Short socks that left her brown legs bare.
She had a crown of golden hair."
I saw his blind eyes peer and stare,
Now there and here, now here and there.

"Blindman," I cried, "these things I see:
Time here has turned eternity.
The clock hands point but only mock,
For it is always three o'clock.
I see the shadows on the wall;
I see the crumbling plaster fall."
"Oh! sir," he said, "I crave your eyes—
Be not so kindly with your lies."

I drew the Blindman to my side;
I told the truth I wished to hide.
I said, "I see your Eleanor
And she is dead upon the floor.

And something fumbles with her hair,
I guess the wind is playing there.
And I see gray rats sleek and stout
That dart about and dart about."

"Now, sir," he said, "I love your lies
And Christ be thanked that took my eyes!
But lead me, lead me to my dead!
And let me touch her once," he said.
I placed his hand upon her head.

And when we left the charnel place,
I dared not look upon his face;
For suddenly upon the street
Arose the sound of trampling feet,
And wheels that rumbled on the ground,
And ground around and ground around,

The din of them that go to slay,
The shout of men and horses' neigh,
And men and beasts swept on to war
A dreadful drumming on before.

It throbbed and throbbed through Nogent Town,
Till desolation settled down.
The Blindman leaned against the door;
"And tell me, sir, about the war,
What is it they are fighting for?"
"Blindman," I cried, "can you not see?
It is to set the whole world free!
It is for sweet democracy—"

"I do not know her, sir," he said,
"My little Eleanor is dead."

BLIND

June Lucas

He saw the noonday sun,
The shadow cast by trees,
The distant hills in blue veils run,
The women weeding on their knees,
The sweaty ploughman close behind,
And yet the man who saw was blind.

He saw the twilight come,
The lights flash in the streets,
Thousands hurrying from the hum
Of great machines, the roar that beats
Into the heart and brain of humankind,
And yet the man who saw was blind.

He saw the banners fly,
The stalwart line of boys,
The cold and rotting dead piled high,
Children robbed of all their joys,
More scraps of paper sealed and signed
And yet the man who saw was blind.

He saw the starving world,
He never met the need,
The great god greed had always whirled
The dust and blotted out the seed
That might have blossomed in his mind,
He did not know that he was blind!

THE BELLS OF BRUGES

Louise Burton Laidlaw

When we were sitting enthralled beneath the tower this summer, one citizen said, "It is wonderful that we have it. The question of its destruction came up again and again in the English and French command."

Another said, "It means more to us than ever now."

"Back with the same question Major,
For the old 'blue, blank and rouge'
Shall we sacrifice the belfry?
May we hit the tower of Bruges?"

"No, I've given you the answer—
Had strict orders from above—
And *I'd* die before the cannon,
You'd not touch those bells we love.
No, there is no use saluting
Now, I saw that dirty grin

Get the hell . . . No, wait a moment
I've my reasons. Here, come in.
Do you know what age-long beauty
And association mean?
That old pile is almost human.
We can't raze the belfry clean
Where its stones have stood for ages;
We can't act like maddened swine
Just for some minute advantage
On one sector of front line."

"Gawd! you know the general orders—
Hit the high spots when you can;
Well you've got more bloomin' notions!—
Spare the tower and kill the man.
It's from up that blasted look-out
That the Huns are making hay.
Puff, they send a baby rocket,
They can see us plain as day,
Almost look into our trenches,—
And they've picked off every scout.
Then you wonder what I have
The bloody gall to kick about."

"Sergeant, war's a dirty game, yet
Here's our chance to play it fair.
Towns are levelled, men are broken
Hearts are shattered,—C'est la guerre!
But we must preserve such beauty,
Progress may continue then.
And, perhaps there's something greater
Than the single lives of men."

"I can't say I understand you
With those highfalutin words,
But I don't keep on feeding man flesh
To those strutting, straffing birds.
Now you know I'm not a coward
And I'm ready for to die
But I can't send out volunteers
When once they've looked me in the eye.
They're great fellows when you know them,
Hell! Each man's a human life
With a world of hopes to live for,
Out beyond this devil's strife."

"See here, man, I was an artist;—
War's my job now, and I would
Raze the city if I fancied
It would do sufficient good.
I've a heart and know your feelings—
Now let's overlook the 'hells'!—
Yes, the tower may have to go;
Think though before you'd hit those bells,
How many a moulder lost his life
To give them perfect harmony,
They say a master gave his soul
That those wonder bells might be."

"Yes, and when the war is done;
When all my topping men are dead,
Their wives can point to that blame tower
As their memorial!—Heigh, Ed,
Send the next five scouts on over,
They won't see light any more.—
Pardon the intrusion, major.—
Come on Corporal.—Damn this war!"

AND THE COCK CREW

Amelia Josephine Burr

"I hate them all!" said old Gaspard,
And in his weather-beaten face
The lines of bitterness grew hard
For he had seen his dwelling-place
Laid waste in very wantonness
And all his little treasures flung
Into that never-sated press
From which no wine, but gall, had sprung—
And not his heart alone was sore,
For in his frail old limbs he bore
Wounds of the heavy ruthless hand
That weighed so cruelly of late
Upon the people and the land.
It was not hard to understand
Who old Gaspard should hate,
Even the German lad who lay
His neighbor in the hospital,

The boy who pleaded, night and day,
"Don't let me die! Don't let me die!
When I see the dawn, I know
I shall live out that day, and then
I'm not afraid . . . till dark . . . but oh,
How soon the night comes round again!
Don't let me die! Don't let me die!"

The old man muttered at each low,
Pitiful, half-delirious cry,
"They should die, had I the say,
In Hell's own torment, one and all!"
And then would drag himself away
Despite each motion's agony
To where the wounded poilus lay
To cheer them with his mimicry
Of barnyard noises and his gay
Old songs of what life used to be.

One night the lad suddenly cried
"Mother!" And though the sister knew,
He was so young, so terrified,
"You're safe—the east is light," she lied.
But "No!" he sobbed. "The cock must crow
Before the dawn—" They did not hear
A cripple crawl across the floor.
But all at once, outside the door
Within the courtyard, strong and clear
Once, twice and thrice, crew chanticleer.
The blue eyes closed, and the boy sighed
"I'm not afraid, now day's begun.
I'll live . . . till . . ." with a smile, he died.

And in that hour when he denied
The god of hate, I think that One
Passed through the hospital's dark yard
And turning, looked on old Gaspard.

A BLINDED POILU TO HIS NURSE

Agnes Lee

I know you only by your tears . . .
I felt them falling on my face.
I had wakened on a hush of dark,
And lay I knew not in what place.

O lady, not a dream was mine!
  Despair had told the truth to me,
And I was fearful of life's call,
  And bitter with my destiny.

But the warm touches of your soul
  Guided me to the darkened years.
Sweet reconciler of my days,
  I know you only by your tears.

THE HEALERS

Laurence Binyon

In a vision of the night I saw them,
  In the battles of the night.
'Mid the roar and the reeling shadows of blood
  They were moving like light,

Light of the reason, guarded
  Tense within the will,
As a lantern under the tossing of boughs
  Burns steady and still.

With scrutiny calm, and with fingers
  Patient as swift
They bind up the hurts and the pain-writhen
  Bodies uplift,

Untired and defenceless; around them
  With shrieks in its breath
Bursts stark from the terrible horizon
  Impersonal death;

But they take not their courage from anger
  That blinds the hot being;
They take not their pity from weakness;
  Tender, yet seeing;

Feeling, yet nerved to the uttermost;
  Keen, like steel;
Yet the wounds of the mind they are stricken with,
  Who shall heal?

They endure to have eyes of the watcher
In hell, and not swerve
For an hour from the faith that they follow,
The light that they serve.

Man true to man, to his kindness
That overflows all,
To his spirit erect in the thunder
When all his forts fall,—

This light, in the tiger-mad welter,
They serve and they save.
What song shall be worthy to sing of them—
Braver than the brave?

ONLY A STRETCHER-BEARER

To K. J. W. of Sydney, N.S.W., and All His Fellows

John Oxenham

"If I had a hundred Victoria Crosses to distribute, every one of them should go to the stretcher-bearers."—General Birdwood

Only a stretcher-bearer!
Only!——
But his life was high,
And higher still his death.
His loyalty and perfect faith
Did his Great Captain magnify,
And his high death
Was more heroical
Than the most stoical
Of fighting-men's;
For, like the Christ, he gave
His life men's lives to save.

He had a passion for life-saving,
An all-unquenchable craving
That no most murderous fire
Could check, no labours tire.
Out there between the lines
He toiled unceasingly,

Sorting the living from the dead,
Nor ever stayed
To count the risks that round him played;
Enough for him that broken men lay there,
Needing his care;
To succour them, he for himself
No thought did spare.

How many owed their lives to him
No man shall tell.
Over the top, in the half-light dim,
Into the fiery hell,
Unsent, he went,
Seeking them there,
And, to the depths of their despair,
Came like an answered prayer.

Then, when his own call came,
He passed, with heart aflame,
To claim the full and meet reward
Of one who, both in life and death,
Had served his Lord.

NIGHT ROAD

ROBERT A. DONALDSON

A pitch-black road, and rain;
Mud underfoot;
No lights;
The crunch of wheels;
The jangle of a chain;
The noisy bumping of a camion train.

Dim forms;
The shuffling steps of men;
The slush of mud;
A vivid lightning flash,
A rocket's glare,
A shell's slow droning through the air.

Black dank woods;
An endless wagon line;
A spurt of fire,
Across—then blackness;
Endless rain;
The noisy bumping of a camion train.

FIELD AMBULANCE IN RETREAT

MAY SINCLAIR

A straight flagged road, laid on the rough earth,
A causeway of stone from beautiful city to city,
Between the tall trees, the slender, delicate trees,
Through the flat green land, by plots of flowers, by black canals thick with heat.

II

The road-makers made it well
Of fine stone, strong for the feet of the oxen and of the great Flemish horses,
And for the high waggons piled with corn from the harvest.
But the labourers are few;
They and their quiet oxen stand aside and wait
By the long road loud with the passing of the guns, the rush of armoured cars and the tramp of an army on the march forward to battle;
And, where the piled corn-waggons went, our dripping ambulance carries home
Its red and white harvest from the fields.

III

The straight-flagged road breaks into dust, into a thin white cloud,
About the feet of a regiment driven back league by league,
Rifles at trail, and standards wrapped in black funeral cloths.
Unhasting, proud in retreat,
They smile as the Red Cross Ambulance rushes by.
(You know nothing of beauty and of desolation who have not seen
That smile of an army in retreat.)
They go: and our shining, beckoning danger goes with them,
And our joy in the harvests that we gathered in at nightfall in the fields;
And like an unloved hand laid on a beating heart
Our safety weighs us down.
Safety hard and strange; stranger and yet more hard,
As, league after dying league, the beautiful, desolate Land
Falls back from the intolerable speed of an Ambulance in retreat
On the sacred, dolorous Way.

IN FLANDERS

James Norman Hall

Could you have seen them marching
  Ten thousand men in line
You would have said that war must be
  Adventurous and fine,
You would have felt your pulses beat
  Fast to the tread of marching feet.

Could you have seen them marching
  Under the June blue skies
With all the glory of their youth
  Shining in their eyes,
You would have bade them all God speed
  To battle at their country's need.

But had you seen them creeping back
  In the grey, grey dawn,
The broken bleeding bodies
  With all their beauty gone,
Oh! never could you cheer again
  To see ten thousand fighting men.

VICTORY AND FAILURE

Alan Mackintosh

Not for the day of victory
I mourn I was not there,
The hard fierce rush of slaying men,
The hands up in the air,
But for the torn ranks struggling on
The old brave hopeless way,
The broken charge, the slow retreat,
And I so far away.

And listening to the tale of Roeux
I think I see again
The steady grim despairing ranks,
The courage and the pain,
The bodies of my friends that lie
Unburied in the dew—
Oh! friends of mine, and I not there
To die along with you!

RETREAT

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

Broken, bewildered by the long retreat
Across the stifling leagues of southern plain,
Across the scorching leagues of trampled grain,
Half-stunned, half-blinded, by the trudge of feet
And dusty smother of the August heat,
He dreamt of flowers in an English lane,
Of hedgerow flowers glistening after rain—
All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet.

All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet—
The innocent names kept up a cool refrain—
All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet,
Chiming and tinkling in his aching brain,
Until he babbled like a child again—
"All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet."

GERMAN PRISONERS

JOSEPH LEE

When first I saw you in the curious street
Like some platoon of soldier ghosts in grey,
My mad impulse was all to smite and slay,
To spit upon you—tread you 'neath my feet.
But when I saw how each sad soul did greet
My gaze with no sign of defiant frown,
How from tired eyes looked spirits broken down,
How each face showed the pale flag of defeat,
And doubt, despair and disillusionment,
And how were grievous wounds on many a head,
And on your garb red-faced was other red;
And how you stooped as men whose strength was spent,
I knew that we had suffered each as other,
And could have grasped your hand and cried, "My brother!"

TO GERMANY

Charles Hamilton Sorley

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But, gropers both through fields of thought confined,
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate, and the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form,
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm,
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But, until peace, the storm,
The darkness, and the thunder and the rain.

A HUN

Vincent G. Burns

He was just a prisoner,
One of a hundred human cattle,
Herded back through the lines
After a big push over the mud-hill
At Montfaucon.
Marvelous how he ever came through alive!
For he was covered with the thickest mud
From head to foot, even to his eyes!

Two hard-boiled medical corps "babies"
Carried him in,
And threw him across a bed
With as little care as if he'd been
A sack of sawdust.
When I came up to him
His head almost touched the floor
And a Frenchman (badly wounded himself),
Who had the next bunk,
Was vainly endeavoring to smash out his brains
With a bottle in his one free hand.

A doughboy cursed me roundly for paying attention
To a "Hun"!
But I went ahead and scraped his mud off,
To find he was a youth
Not more than sixteen,
A fair-haired, fair-skinned youth,
Still breathing,
But bleeding terribly from a deep wound in his chest.
When I had bathed and bound his wound
He opened his eyes, slowly, looked around.
"Where am I?" in a soft low-German accent.
"In good hands," I said. "We'll take good care of you."
"Am I wounded badly?" anxiously he asked.
"No, you'll be all right in a few days!"
But I had my doubts; it was a bad bayonet cut.

"Tell me," I said, "how did you get cut up like this."
He threw back his head and looked away.
"I put up my hands," he said, "but the American
Stabbed me anyway!"
He was exhausted from loss of blood;
His breathing was labored;
His pain must have been great;
But there was no sign of complaint.
I cheered him up as best I could
And went on the rounds again. . . .

In the morning the fair-haired youth,
With the blue eyes, was dead.
Some grieving mother in the home-land
Would never know how bravely a son had died.

STRANGE MEETING

WILFRED OWEN

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granite which Titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.

And by his smile I knew that sullen hall:
With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained,
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped or down the flues made moan.
"Strange friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."
"None," said the other, "but the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something has been left
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery;
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery;
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot wheels,
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint,
But not through wounds, not on the cess of war
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . ."

BACK

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

They ask me where I've been,
And what I've done and seen.
But what can I reply
Who know it wasn't I,

But some one just like me,
Who went across the sea
And with my head and hands
Killed men in foreign lands . . .
Though I must bear the blame
Because he bore my name.

THE QUAKER MEETING-HOUSE

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

Beyond the corn-rows from our Barracks stood
Along the elm-arched turn-pike, out of town,
The Quaker Meeting-House, likewise of wood,
With windows burning when the sun went down;
Sided with shingles, roofed like plain big A,
With neither bell-tower, cross, nor apse . . .
And whitest when the moon was off that way,
Beyond the rustling corn-rows, after taps. . . .

And in the dark the weary boys would joke
From cot to cot about the Quaker folk:

No double bars of silver braid they wore,
They never learned what the salute was for,
Nor the ten bugle-calls (as we):
They passed the Captains in their homespun gray,
With salutation but by "yea" and "nay",
And antique "thee" . . . and "thee". . . .

And trusted to "the inner light," they say. . . .
But we? . . .
They never learned, beneath a high cross-pole,
On dummy (jerking like a living soul),
Where bayonets best may make a certain hole,
And then pull free. . . .
They never learned by scrunch of hand and thumb
How deftly one might make two eyeballs come,
Were trusty trench-knife lost in some melee . . .
As we. . . .

But like their humble-witted forebears, they
Would enter, from the turn-pike, each First Day,
That little door—with clapboard lintel telling
By date colonial how old the dwelling
In which they bowed in silent rows to pray . . .
And all the week, under the blue sky-dome
(Fringed with the tree-tops on the inner base)
They hoed their corn-rows in the crusted loam,
Or carried back a baby where it fell,
Or gave a child cold water from the well,
Or gathered faggots, piling them in place,—
Against the Winter and the Fires of Home. . . .

And when we quit the Barracks for the Boats
With awful shouts in throats
(Though still some human laughter),
It seemed most strange this quiet folk should quit
The Meeting House and all the peace of it,
And follow after. . . .

We neither of us quit in fact . . .
However alien the surrounding tract . . .
And whilst we worked the poison-fire and shell
(Taught, like our foes, to work them fiercely well),
This wistful, meditative folk
Would walk between in No Man's Land,
By crater-pits and molten sand,
And tree-spikes where the copses used to stand—
As if conducted by an ancient spell:
Under the roar, the flame, the smoke,
This quaint, uncanny, visionary folk
Through the barrage would enter each First Day
That legendary door with lintel telling
By *anno domini* how safe the Dwelling
(Even when the shrapnel on the roof-tree broke)
In which they bowed in silent rows to pray. . . .
Or was that timbered house of seasoned oak,
Four-square in lightnings of the booming Plain
Only a phantom and the Devil's joke
On us poor fools, the slayers and the slain? . . .

The Killing's over and the Barracks creep,
Hauled by a rope and windlass, down the pike—
Sold for machine-shops, very cheap,

Or for a sty and cow-barn, if you like.
The Killing's over, but the Meeting-House
(Within forever quiet as a mouse),
After the hail of shot, the rain of fire,
Still gleams, when hoeing in the fields is done,
With shingle-siding in the setting sun,
Before the hour of Vega of the Lyre . . .
You cannot guess how beautiful it seems:
Above the Capitol and marble dome,
Above the spired Cathedral and its dreams,
Unto the way-worn sons of men it gleams
Far down the Land-Marks to the ocean streams,
With windows burning like the Fires of Home.

OLD BATTLE-FIELD

JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY

The way was footless up the steep
Where thousands once had bled,
Nor was there now halt age to weep
Youth long since dead,
But silence, with the clouds for bed,
Our Lady of Tours.

The trees fall gold, and stretch gaunt limbs,
And grow again in green;
All seasons hearken to the hymns
By mankind seen
In harvests none shall ever glean,
Our Lady of Tours.

Over the trees the clouds are high,
Over the clouds the sun.
The dreams of youth have drifted by,
One after one,
And the days of dreaming are done,
Our Lady of Tours.

A. E. F.

Carl Sandburg

There will be a rusty gun on the wall, sweetheart,
The rifle's grooves curling with flakes of rust.
A spider will make a silver string nest in the darkest, warmest
corner of it.
The trigger and the range-finder, they too will be rusty.
And no hands will polish the gun, and it will hang on the wall.
Forefingers and thumbs will point absently and casually towards it.
It will be among the half-forgotten, wished-to-be-forgotten things.
They will tell the spider: Go on, you're doing good work!

TRANSFORMATION

Vincent G. Burns

In many homes
One sees old shrapnel cases
Converted into lamps;
Think of it!
The canisters that carried wholesale death
Now hold the warm glow of light!

Old forts, old positions
Once fiercely defended
Now are overgrown with the beautiful green
Of Nature's mantle of grass.

And the shell-pocked fields
And scarred hill-sides
Now are healed
With the waving gold of millet
And buckwheat.

They say a dreadful blotch of blood
On Hill two hundred and three,
A stain on the face of the earth,
Fifty feet by thirty,
Has been washed clean and sweet
By God's patient rains. . . .

GRASS

CARL SANDBURG

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo,
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg,
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun,
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

VII

ECHOES OF OLD WARS

THE BALLAD OF THE ARMY[1]

Tu Fu[2]

Chariots rumble and roar;
Horses whinny and neigh;
Each with bow and arrows belted on, the footmen march.
Grandsires, mothers, children, wives, press for a last farewell,
Raising such dust they do not see the Hsien Yang city bridge;
Pulling at clothes, hindering feet, they block the march with their cries;
The sound of their crying rises straight to the heights of the lowering sky above.

One who was passing along the road questioned a soldier there;
His bitterness at marching showed in the way he made reply,—
"At fifteen I went north to serve upon the Amur frontier;
Forty found me stationed at the western border camp;
When I went I was the beadle, though I was just a boy;
Coming back, my hair was white,—and still I have to serve.
I saw the border-battlefield become a sea of blood,
And still our warlike Emperor's ambition knows no end.

"Sir, have you not heard
How in the days of Han Shantung's two hundred counties lost
Some thousands of their villages in ruins grown to thorns?
Though one's wife were strong enough to handle hoe and plow,
Seed produced but barren fields and no return in food.
Or take, again, the troops of Ch'in, they had a heavy load,
They were driven here and there just like chickens or curs."

I wished to interpose a question then,
But he kept on expressing his deep hate:
"For instance, in the winter now just past,
Before he finished the western gate repairs,
The magistrate must press us hard for cash—
But where could we get money for the tax?

[1] Translated by E. W. Houlding.
[2] A.D. 712-770.

It certainly is bad to raise a boy;
It's better far, I know, to have a girl.
If you have a girl, perchance, she may marry well near home;
If you have a boy, he is lost, cut off like weeds and grass.

"You, sir, have not seen the head of Kokonor,
Since olden times the bleaching bones have never had a care,
The younger ghosts there curse their lot, the old ones mourn and weep,
With darkened sky, and drenching rain,—a melancholy sound!"

THE LONG WAR [1]

Li Po

They fought last year by the upper valley of Son-Kan,
This year by the high ranges of the Leek Mountains,
They are still fighting . . . fighting! . . .
They wash their swords and armor in the cold waves of the Tiao-Chih Sea;
Their horses, turning loose over the Tien Mountains,
Seek the meagre grasses in the white snow.

Long, long have they been fighting, full ten thousand li away from home;
Their armor is worn out, the soldiers grown old. . . .

Oh, the warlike Tartars!
To them manslaughter is their plowing,
Plowing, oh from ancient times, in the fields of white bones and yellow sands!

It was in vain that the Emperor of Chin built the Great Wall,
Hoping to shut out those fiery hordes.
Where the wall stands, down to the Han Dynasty,
The beacon fires are still burning.

The beacon fires keep on burning;
The war will never cease! . . .

The soldiers fight and die in death-grapple on the battlefield,
While their wounded horses howl in lamentation,
Throwing up their heads at the desolate sky;

[1] Translated by Cheng Yu Sun.

The gray ravens and hungry vultures tear,
And carry away the long bowels of the dead,
Hanging them on the twigs of lifeless trees. . . .

O soldiers who fight long—
    Their blood varnishes the desert weeds!
But the generals who lead them on—
    They have accomplished nothing!

AT CARCASSONNE

WINFRED ERNEST GARRISON

Down the valleys of Languedoc,
Where the ghosts of knights and troubadours flock,
Hiding by day and riding by night,
When the road in the moonlight is silvery white—
So we journeyed on and on
Up to the Cité of Carcassonne.
Three score towers against the sky
Like mailed fists clenched and lifted high;
Tall battlements; a grim château;
And round and round the gray walls go.
A draw-bridge here, a postern there,
Loop-holes for archers everywhere,
And moat and scarpe and barbicans
All built in the days of high romance.
Gaul and Roman, Goth and Moor
Fought and wrought on this hill, and sure,
If ever war was glorified
By chivalry and song beside,
It must have been when Charles the Great,
Simon de Montfort and Louis the Saint
Stormed this town or held its towers,
And tournaments filled the quieter hours;
Or when Bernart Alanhan of old Narbonne,
As a troubadour guest of Carcassonne,
Sang of the brave knights' feats of war
And the beautiful ladies they did them for.
Troubadours, ladies and knights are gone.
No flags fly over Carcassonne
Save the banners of sunset aflame in the sky
As the one-armed watchman passes by.

Here in the scenes of old romance,
He lifts a voice for peace in France.
He told me his story yesterday,
And now he halts on his round to say:
How noble this business of fighting appears
Through the mist and haze of a thousand years,
Still they call it right against wrong,
And deck it with banners and bugles and song;
But this I pray God and Our Lady for—
In my children's time may there be no war.

AFTER BLENHEIM

ROBERT SOUTHEY

It was a summer evening,
  Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
  Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
  Roll something large and round
Which he beside the rivulet
  In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy
  Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
  And with a natural sigh
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory."

"I find them in the garden,
  For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough
  The ploughshare turns them out.
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out.
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then
And newborn baby died:
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won
And our good Prince Eugene";
"Why 'twas a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine;
"Nay . . . nay . . . my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory.

"And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."

"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin:—
"Why that I cannot tell," said he,
"But 'twas a famous victory."

PLAYTHINGS

WILLIAM COWPER

Great princes have great playthings.
Some have played
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain high.
Some have amassed the dull sad years of life
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)
With schemes of monumental fame, and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, t' immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game which, were their subjects wise,
Kings should not play at. Nations would do well
T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

BYRON

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily, and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again
And all went merry as a marriage-bell—
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it—No; 'twas but the wind
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet

To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips—"The foe! They come! They come!"

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard too have her Saxon foes:—
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe—in one red burial blent!

NOT ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

JOHN PIERPONT

"To fall on the battle-field fighting for my dear country,—that would not be hard."—The Neighbors

O no, no,—let me lie
Not on a field of battle when I die!
Let not the iron tread
Of the mad war-horse crush my helmèd head:

Nor let the reeking knife,
That I have drawn against a brother's life,
Be in my hand when Death
Thunders along, and tramples me beneath
His heavy squadron's heels,
Or gory felloes of his cannon's wheels.

From such a dying bed,
Though o'er it float the stripes of white and red,
And the bald eagle brings
The clustered stars upon his wide-spread wings
To sparkle in my sight,
O, never let my spirit take her flight!

I know that beauty's eye
Is all the brighter where gay pennants fly,
And brazen helmets dance,
And sunshine flashes on the lifted lance;
I know that bards have sung,
And people shouted till the welkin rung,
In honor of the brave
Who on the battle-field have found a grave;
I know that o'er their bones
Have grateful hands piled monumental stones.
Some of those piles I've seen:
The one at Lexington upon the green
Where the first blood was shed,
And to my country's independence led;
And others, on our shore,
The "Battle Monument" at Baltimore,
And that on Bunker's Hill.
Ay, and abroad, a few more famous still;
Thy "tomb," Themistocles,
That looks out yet upon the Grecian seas,
And which the waters kiss
That issue from the gulf of Salamis.
And thine, too, have I seen,
Thy mound of earth, Patroclus, robed in green,
That, like a natural knoll,
Sheep climb and nibble over as they stroll,
Watched by some turbaned boy,
Upon the margin of the plain of Troy.
Such honors grace the bed,
I know, whereon the warrior lays his head,
And hears, as life ebbs out,
The conquered flying, and the conqueror's shout;
But as his eye grows dim,
What is a column or a mound to him?
What, to the parting soul,
The mellow note of bugles? What the roll
Of drums! No, let me die
Where the blue heaven bends o'er me lovingly,
And the soft summer air,
As it goes by me, stirs my thin white hair,
And from my forehead dries
The death-damp as it gathers, and the skies
Seem waiting to receive
My soul to their clear depths! Or let me leave

The world when round my bed
Wife, children, weeping friends are gatherèd,
And the calm voice of prayer
And holy hymning shall my soul prepare
To go and be at rest
With kindred spirits,—spirits who have blessed
The human brotherhood
By labors, cares, and counsels for their good.

SONG OF MYSELF [1]

WALT WHITMAN

I am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment,
I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,
Again the attacking cannon, mortars,
Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole,
The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,
The ambulanza slowly trailing its red drip,
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs,
The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion,
The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously waves with his hand,
He gasps through the clot, Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments.

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth,
(I tell not the fall of the Alamo,
Not one escaped to tell the fall of the Alamo,
The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo),
'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men.

Retreating they had formed in a hollow square with their baggage for breastworks,
Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times their number was the price they took in advance,

[1] Abridged.

Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone,
They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their arms and march'd back prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers,
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud and affectionate,
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First-day morning they were brought out in squads and massacred, it was beautiful early summer,
The work commenced about five o'clock and was over by eight.

None obeyed the command to kneel,
Some made a mad and helpless rush, some stood stark and straight,
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the living and the dead lay together,
The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the newcomers saw them there,
Some half-kill'd attempted to crawl away,
These were despatched with bayonets or batter'd with the blunts of muskets,
A youth not seventeen years old seized his assassin till two more came to release him,
The three were all torn and cover'd with the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;
This is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and twelve young men.

THE GUNS [1]

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Continual guns, be silent for a moment,
Be silent, now.
We know your thirst. We hear the roll of your wheels
Crushing down tangled June,
Virginia June,
With tires of iron, with heavy caissons creaking,

[1] Abridged from "John Brown's Body."

Crushing down maiden-hair and wilderness-seal,
Scaring the possum and the rabbit-children,
Scaring the redbird and the mocking bird,
We know your bloody thirst so soon to be slaked
With the red burst-grape juices. . . .

WAR [1]

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Shake out the long line of verse like a lanyard of woven steel
And let us praise while we can what things no praise can deface,
The corn that hurried so fast to be ground in an iron wheel
The obdurate, bloody dream that slept before it grew base.

Not the silk flag and the shouts, the catchword patrioteers,
The screaming noise of the press, the preachers who howled for blood,
But a certain and stubborn pith in the hearts of the cannoneers
Who hardly knew their guns before they died in the mud.

They came like a run of salmon where the ice-fed Kennebec flings
Its death at the arrow-silver of the packed and mounting host,
They came like the young deer trooping to the ford by Eutaw Springs,
Their new horns fuzzy with velvet, their coats still rough with the frost.

North and South they assembled, one cry and the other cry,
And both are ghosts to us now, old drums hung up on a wall,
But they were the first hot wave of youth too-ready to die,
And they went to war with an air, as if they went to a ball.

Dress-uniform boys who rubbed their buttons brighter than gold,
And gave them to girls for flowers and rasp-berry lemonade,
Unused to the sick fatigue, the route-march made in the cold,
The stink of the fever camps, the tarnish rotting the blade.

We in our time have seen that impulse going to war
And how that impulse is dealt with. We have seen the circle complete.
The ripe wheat wasted like trash between the fool and the whore.
We cannot praise again that anger of the ripe wheat.

[1] Abridged from "John Brown's Body."

This we have seen as well, distorted and half-forgotten
In what came before and after, where the blind went leading the blind,
The first swift rising of youth before the symbols were rotten,
The price too much to pay, the payment haughty in kind.

So with these men and then. They were much like the men you know,
Under the beards and the strangeness of clothes with a different fit.
They wrote mush-notes to their girls and wondered how it would go,
Half-scared, half-fierce at the thought, but none yet ready to quit.

Georgia, New York, Virginia, Rhode Island, Florida, Maine
Piney-woods squirrel-hunter and clerk with the brand new gun,
Thus they were marshalled and drilled, while Spring turned Summer again,
Until they could stumble toward death at garter-snake-crooked Bull Run.

MY FATHER AND I

Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

My father prayed as he drew a bead on the graycoats,
Back in those blazing years when the house was divided.
Bless his old heart! There never was truer or kinder;
Yet he prayed, while hoping the ball from his clumsy old musket
Might thud to the body of some hot-eyed young Southerner
And tumble him limp in the mud of the Vicksburg trenches.

That was my father, serving the Lord and his country,
Praying and shooting whole-heartedly,
Never a doubt.
And now what about
Me in my own day of battle?
Could I put my prayers behind a slim Springfield bullet?
Hardly, except to mutter: "Jesus, we part here.
My country calls for my body, and takes my soul also.
Do you see those humans herded and driven against me?
Turn away, Jesus, for I've got to kill them.
Why? Oh, well, it's the way of my fathers,

And such evils bring some vast, vague good to my country.
I don't know why, but to-day my business is killing,
And my gods must be luck and the devil till this thing is over.
Leave me now, Lord. Your eye makes me slack in my duty."
My father could mix his prayers and his shooting,
And he was a rare true man in his generation.
Now, I'm fairly decent in mine, I reckon;
Yet if I should pray like him, I'd spoil it by laughing.
What is the matter?

THE BIGLOW PAPERS [1]

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Thrash away, you'll hev to rattle
  On them kittle-drums o' yourn,—
'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle
  That is ketched with mouldy corn;
Put in tiff, you fifer feller,
  Let folks see how spry you be,—
Guess you'll toot till you are yeller
  'Fore you git ahold o' me! . . .

Ez fer war, I call it murder,—
  There you hev it plain an' flat;
I don't want to go no furder
  Than my Testyment fer that;
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,
  It's ez long ez it is broad,
An' you've got to sit up airly
  Ef you want to take in God.

'Taint your eppylets an' feathers
  Make the thing a grain more right;
'Taint afollerin' your bell-wethers
  Will excuse ye in His sight;
Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
  An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'mint ain't to answer for it,
  God'll send the bill to you.

[1] Abridged.

Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'
  Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
Ef it's right to go amowin'
  Feller-men like oats an' rye?
I dunno but wut it's pooty
  Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—
But it's curus Christian dooty
  This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats. . . .

Tell ye jest the eend I've come to
  Arter cipherin' plaguey smart,
An' it makes a handy sum, tu,
  Any gump could larn by heart;
Laborin' man an' laborin' woman
  Hev one glory an' one shame.
Ev'y thin' thet's done inhuman
  Injers all on 'em the same.

'Taint by turnin' out to hack folks
  You're agoin' to git your right,
Nor by lookin' down on black folks
  Coz you're put upon by white;
Slavery ain't o' nary color,
  'Taint the hide thet makes it wus,
All it keers fer in a feller
  'S jest to make him fill its pus!

A CONFEDERATE PRISON [1]

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

The triple stockade of Andersonville the damned,
Where men corrupted like flies in their own dung
And the gangrened sick were black with smoke and their filth.
There were thirty thousand Federal soldiers there
Before the end of the war.
  A man called Wirtz
A Swiss, half brute, half fool, and wholly a clod,
Commanded that camp of spectres.
  One reads what he did
And longs to hang him higher than Haman hung,
And then one reads what he said when he was tried

[1] Abridged from "John Brown's Body."

After the war—and sees the long, heavy face,
The dull fly buzzing stupidly in the trap,
The ignorant lead of the voice, saying and saying,
"Why, I did what I could, I was ordered to keep the jail.
Yes, I set up deadlines, sometimes chased men with dogs,
Put men in torturing stocks, killed this one and that,
Let the camp corrupt till it tainted the very guards
Who came there with mortal sickness.
But they were prisoners, they were dangerous men,
If a hundred died a day—how was it my fault?
I did my duty. I always reported the deaths.
I don't see what I did different from other people.
I fought well at Seven Pines and was badly wounded.
I have witnesses here to tell you I'm a good man
And that I was really kind. I don't understand.
I'm old. I'm sick. You're going to hang me. Why?" . . .

THE BATTLEFIELD

WALT WHITMAN

Then the camps of the wounded—O heavens what scene is this?
Is this indeed *humanity*—these butchers' shambles?
There are several of them, there they lie
In the largest, in an open space in the woods,
From two hundred to three hundred poor fellows—
The groans and screams—the odor of blood,
Mixed with the fresh scent of the night, the grass, the trees—
That slaughter-house!
O well is it their mothers, their sisters cannot see them—
Cannot conceive and never conceived these things!

One man is shot by a shell, both in the arm and leg—
Both are amputated—there lie the rejected members—
Some have their legs blown off—some bullets through the breast—
Some indescribably horrible wounds in the face or head,
All mutilated, sickening, torn, gouged out—
Some in the abdomen—some mere boys—many rebels, badly hurt—
They take their regular turns with the rest, just the same as any—
The surgeons use them just the same!
Such is the camp of the wounded—such a fragment,
A reflection far off of the bloody scene—
While all over the clear, large moon comes out
At times softly, quietly shining.

Amid the woods, the scene of flitting souls—
Amid the crack and crash and yelling sounds—
The impalpable perfume of the woods—
And yet the pungent, stifling smoke—the radiance of the moon,
Looking from heaven at intervals so placid—the sky so heavenly—
The clear-obscure up there, those buoyant upper oceans—
A few large, placid stars beyond, coming silently and languidly out,
And then disappearing—the melancholy, draperied night above, around.
And never one more desperate in any age or land—
Both partied now in force—masses—
No fancy battle, no semi-play,
But fierce and savage demons fighting there—
Courage and scorn of death is the rule, exceptions almost none!

LINCOLN AND DAVIS [1]

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Tall Lincoln reviews
Endless columns crunching across new snow.
They pass uncheering at the marching-salute.
Lincoln sits on his horse with his farmer's seat,
Watching the eyes go by and the eyes come on.
The gaunt long body is dressed in its Sunday black,
The giant face, strange as an omen, sad and foreboding.
The eyes look at him, he looks back at the eyes;
They pass and pass. They go back to their camps at last.
"So that was him," they say. "So that's the old man.
I'm glad we saw him. He isn't so much on looks
But he looks like people you know. He looks sad all right,
I never saw nobody look quite as sad as that
Without it made you feel foolish. He don't do that.
He makes you feel—I dunno—I'm glad we could see him.
He was glad to see us but you could tell all the same
This war's plumb killin' him. You can tell by his face.
I never saw such a look on any man's face.
I guess it's tough for him. Well, we saw him, for once."

That day in Richmond, a mob of angry women
Swarm in the streets and riot for bread or peace.
They loot some shops, a few for the bread they need,
A few for thieving, most because they are moved

[1] Abridged from "John Brown's Body."

By discontent and hunger to do as the rest.
The troops are called out. The troops are about to fire,
But Davis gets on a wagon and calms the crowd
Before the tumbled bodies clutter the street. . . .

Davis goes back from the riot, his shoulders stooped,
The glow of speech has left him and he feels cold.
He eats a scant meal quickly and turns to the endless
Papers piled on his desk, the squabbles and plans,
A haggard dictator, fretting the men he rules
And being fretted by them.
He dreams perhaps
Of old days, riding wild horses beside his wife
Back in his youth, on a Mississippi road.
That was a good time. It is past. He drowns in his papers. . . .

Turn your eyes away
From these chiefs and captains, put them back in their books.
Let the armies sleep like bears in a hollow cave.
War is an iron screen in front of a time,
With pictures smoked upon it in red and black,
Some gallant enough, some deadly, but all intense.
We look at the picture, thinking we know the time,
We only know the screen. . . .

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

In Springfield, Illinois

VACHEL LINDSAY

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town,
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play;
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart,
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free;
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

DISARMAMENT

J. G. Whittier

"Put up the sword!" The voice of Christ once more
Speaks, in the pauses of the cannon's roar,
O'er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped
And left dry ashes; over trenches heaped
With nameless dead; o'er cities starving slow
Under a rain of fire; through wards of woe
Down which a groaning diapason runs
From tortured brothers, husbands, lovers, sons
Of desolate women in their far-off homes,
Waiting to hear the step that never comes!
O men and brothers! let that voice be heard.
War fails, try peace; put up the useless sword!

Fear not the end. There is a story told
In Eastern tents, when autumn nights grow cold,
And round the fire the Mongol shepherds sit
With grave responses listening unto it:
Once, on the errands of his mercy bent,
Buddha, the holy and benevolent,
Met a fell monster, huge and fierce of look,
Whose awful voice the hills and forests shook.
"O son of peace!" the giant cried, "thy fate
Is sealed at last, and love shall yield to hate."
The unarmed Buddha looking, with no trace
Of fear or anger, in the monster's face,
In pity said: "Poor fiend, even thee I love."
Lo! as he spake the sky-tall terror sank
To hand-breadth size; the huge abhorrence shrank
Into the form and fashion of a dove;
And where the thunder of its rage was heard,
Circling above him sweetly sang the bird:
"Hate hath no harm for love," so ran the song;
"And peace unweaponed conquers every wrong!"

THE PEOPLE'S SONG OF PEACE

JOAQUIN MILLER

The grass is green on Bunker Hill,
  The waters sweet in Brandywine;
The sword sleeps in the scabbard still,
  The farmer keeps his flock and vine;
Then who would mar the scene today
With vaunt of battlefield or fray?

The brave corn lifts in regiments
  Ten thousand sabres in the sun;
The ricks replace the battle-tents,
  The bannered tassels toss and run.
The neighing steed, the bugle's blast,
These be but stories of the past.

The earth has healed her wounded breast,
  The cannons plough the field no more;
The heroes rest! O, let them rest
  In peace along the peaceful shore!
They fought for peace, for peace they fell;
They sleep in peace, and all is well.

The fields forget the battles fought,
  The trenches wave in golden grain:
Shall we neglect the lessons taught,
  And tear the wounds agape again?
Sweet Mother Nature, nurse the land,
And heal her wounds with gentle hand.

Lo! peace on earth! Lo! flock and fold!
  Lo! rich abundance, fat increase,
And valleys clad in sheen of gold!
  O, rise and sing a song of peace!
For Theseus roams the land no more,
And Janus rests with rusted door.

WAR

E. Merrill Root

Did the rose-bush or the oak
Thrill at Trenton's battle-smoke?
Did the earthworm in the mould
Shout when Gettysburg unrolled
Its tawny thunders over him?
Did corn-grains buried in the dim
Terrible creative ground
Cease growing at the shaken sound
Of Grant's gaunt thousands marching by?
Well, pondering their conduct, I
Think their aloof indifference
Was most amazing commonsense!

A CURIOUS BOY [1]

Edgar Lee Masters

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely

[1] Excerpt from "Silence."

And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

AS TOILSOME I WANDERED VIRGINIA'S WOODS

WALT WHITMAN

As toilsome I wandered Virginia's woods,
To the music of rustling leaves kicked by my feet (for 'twas autumn),
I marked at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier;
Mortally wounded he and buried on the retreat (easily all could I understand),
The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose—yet this sign left,
On a tablet scrawled and nailed on the tree by the grave,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering,
Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene of life,
Yet at times, through changeful season and scene, abrupt, alone, or in the crowded street,
Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave, comes the inscription rude in Virginia's woods,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

AN OLD BATTLE-FIELD

FRANK L. STANTON

The softest whisperings of the scented South,
And rust and roses in the cannon's mouth;

And where the thunders of the fight were born,
The wind's sweet tenor in the standing corn;

With song of larks, low-lingering in the loam,
And blue skies bending over love and home.

But still the thought: Somewhere,—upon the hills,
Or where the vales ring with the whip-poor-wills,

Sad wistful eyes and broken hearts that beat
For the loved sound of unreturning feet,

And, when the oaks their leafy banners wave,
Dream of the battle and an unmarked grave!

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY

FRANCIS MILES FINCH

By the flow of the inland river,
  Where the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of grave grass quiver,
  Asleep are the ranks of the dead;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Under the one, the blue;
  Under the other, the gray.

These in the robings of glory,
  Those in the gloom of defeat,
All, with the battle blood gory,
  In the dusk of eternity meet;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Under the laurel, the blue;
  Under the willow, the gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
  The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
  Alike for the friend and the foe;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Under the roses, the blue;
  Under the lilies, the gray.

So with an equal splendor
  The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
  On the blossoms blooming for all;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
'Broidered with gold, the blue;
  Mellowed with gold, the gray.

So, when the summer calleth
  On forest and field and grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
  The cooling drip of the rain;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Wet with the rain, the blue;
  Wet with the rain, the gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
  The generous deed was done;
In the storm of the years that are fading
  No braver battle was won;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Under the blossoms, the blue;
  Under the garlands, the gray.

No more shall the war-cry sever,
  Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
  When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Love and tears for the blue;
  Tears and love for the gray.

VIII

WOMEN AND WAR

A SONG FOR TWO VOICES

MAURICE HEWLETT

O mother, mother, isn't it fun,
The soldiers marching past in the sun?
Child, child, what are you saying?
Come to church. We should be praying.

Look, mother, at their bright spears!
The leaves are falling like women's tears.
You are not looking at what I see.
Nay, but I look at what must be.

Hark to the pipes! See the flag flying!
I hear the sound of a girl crying.
How many hundreds before they are done!
How many mothers wanting a son!

Here rides the general, pacing slow!
Well he may, if he knows what I know!
O, this war, what a glorious game!
Sin and shame, sin and shame.

A MOTHER'S CHRONOLOGY

EVELYN M. WATSON

You measure life by months and days
According to some calendar,
But I must count in other ways,
I might reflect, in secret, sir.

There's a worn-out shoe for one year old,
A battered slate and broken bat,
A tarnished cup that once seemed gold,
And useless things like that.

I do not store my attic full,
But full is memory—
The painted sled he used to pull—
A whistle from a tree.

In later years his sweaters marked—
Initialed for his 'Varsity—
The memory of where he parked
The car that used to be.

I count the years by each small token,
His badly battered desk of oak,
His putt and mashie—all are broken,
The clocks that made him joke.

My son is gone—he went to battle.
I keep these memories once for all,
A sword in hands that held a rattle—
I almost hear him call.

I would not count by months and years,
(A calendar old savants gave).
I reckon wreaths, the prayers, the tears
With which I grieving deck his grave.

THE CROSS

To the Mothers of the Martyred Dead upon the Field of Battle

JOSEPHINE TURCK BAKER

My flesh cries out for its own flesh!
My blood demands its own heart's blood!
The thundrous roar of cannon is the answer to my call.
Give me back my flesh and blood!
To bring forth I did pass through dark Gethsemane,
And bear with Him the tortures of the Cross;
And to what end? to add one more unto
The martyred dead upon the field of battle.
His dear face, covered with my kisses,
Upturned in marble coldness, blood-stained,
The death-dew gathering on his brow.
His sweet voice, lingering fondly "Farewell, Mother!" forever stilled.

His loving arms entwined about me,
Mangled, torn with shot and shell.
O Mother of the Christ!
Again I pass through dark Gethsemane,
And share with thee the tortures of the Cross.

A WAR-LULLABY

August, 1916

ÉMILE CAMMAERTS

Sleep, sleep, baby, sleep,
Baby soon will be asleep.

The fire dwindles and the wind moans,
The rain lashes the window-panes. . . .
Is it raining and blowing there?
Hailing or thundering, perhaps?

Sleep, sleep, baby, sleep. . . .

Is he well?
Is he warm?
Is he lacking naught?
Has he all he wants?
His coat, his matches, and his gloves,
And, in his pocket, next his heart,
My last letter
And all its love?

Baby soon will be asleep. . . .

The lamp burns low, the fire dwindles.
We shall have to go to bed.
The child is clasping its wee fists. . . .
Is my big child sleeping too?
Sleeping peacefully before the battle?
Is he running madly
Through the shells?
Or is he lying in some hole,
With open mouth and with closed eyes?

Sleep, sleep, baby, sleep. . . .

The child moans and the wind swells the curtains,
The wick splutters,
The child turns in its cot,
The rain ceases, the night shivers,
The sadness of it is fearful. . . .

Baby soon will be asleep. . . .

MY SON

ADA TYRRELL

Here is his little cambric frock
  That I laid by in lavender so sweet,
And here his tiny shoe and sock
  I made with loving care for his dear feet.

I fold the frock across my breast,
  And in imagination, ah, my sweet,
Once more I hush my babe to rest,
  And once again I warm those little feet.

Where do those strong young feet now stand?
  In flooded trench, half numb to cold or pain,
Or marching through the desert sand
  To some dread place that they may never gain.

God guide him and his men today!
  Though death may lurk in any tree or hill,
His brave young spirit is their stay,
  Trusting in that they'll follow where he will.

They love him for his tender heart
  When poverty or sorrow asks for aid,
But he must see each do their part—
  Of cowardice alone he is afraid.

O ask no honours on the field,
  That other men have won as brave as he—
I only pray that God may shield
  My son, and bring him safely back to me!

MOTHERS WITH LITTLE SONS

ANGELA MORGAN

O mothers with little sons
And burning hearts to teach,
You are the chosen ones—
Give hearing, I beseech!
The world is a ghastly place
Since war has slain our men;
But yours is the gift
And yours the grace
To bring love back again.

Mothers, I beg you, heed
What hate's dark hand has done;
How the hearts of people bleed
Till peace and right are won.
How the maimed and halt and blind
And the dread ones hidden away
Are a challenge to all mankind
To fashion a better way.

Mothers with little sons,
As you hold them to your breast,
Teach them to hate the guns,
That love and faith are best.
Show how the tyrant War
Destroys but does not win;
How the goals men battle for
Are lost with the world's great sin.

Strip from the monster's frame
His glittering robe of lies;
Show him in all his shame
To your children's visioning eyes.
Show how the lust to kill
Is the jungle's law of might,
And shells dropped down on a helpless town
Are murder in God's sight.

O mothers with little sons
Who stand with lifted faces,
All of earth's helpless ones
Cry from the lonely places.

And the dead men plead their cause,
And the crippled men implore:
"Go, fashion the Future's laws
That war shall be no more."

For war is a knave's design,
And a coward's brutal scheme,
And men whose courage is divine
Shall foster a nobler dream.
O mothers with little sons,
The years lie in your hands.
You are the chosen ones,
Men wait for your commands.
Not till your lips declare:
"Our sons no more shall fight!"
Shall the crimson soil be fair
And the ravaged earth be right.

WE MOTHERS KNOW

John Drinkwater

"Peace," they have said.
  Though the sad profit of our pain
    We grieve till time is gone,
  We shall not learn to build again
    The bricks of Babylon—
Our sons are dead.

Stilled are the guns.
  Good will, they say, shall heal, shall bless
    The lands now, year by year;
  But though the merciful possess
    The earth, they shall not hear
Our little sons.

They were our friends;
  Our thought, our breath, our blood we gave
    To make them so;
  They bought us peace, and in the grave
    Is all the peace they know,
To make amends.

Leaders and lords,
Who in your pride decree that thus
Or thus shall scores be paid,
An age is building when with us
Your reckoning shall be made,
Who have no swords.

We mothers know;
By the world's hearths we sit and dream;
Again we watch them die;
They willed the peace that you blaspheme,
And, though you will deny,
It shall be so.

HERITAGE

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

"And if that men should cease from war,
What surety can there be
Of hardihood and sovereignty
And might, so battled for?
Whence shall a master draw his strength
And splendor, if so be, at length,
The strong man cease from war?"

Oh, he might some day light his mind
With fires that glowed when he lay blind;
The watch-fires of all motherkind—
The ardors that encompassed him
While he lay hid, unmade and dim,
Beleaguered as a bonden thrall,
With her lone body for a wall.
And she, his stronghold of a year
Against the armaments of fear,—
Her arms his wreathéd cherubim,
Fought with the hosts of hell for him,
And smiling in the eyes of Death,
Tore from her heart his gift of breath.

Yet, "Whence shall be their hardihood,
If men forbear to spill men's blood?"
From her uncounted agony
Through climbing ages all worn by,
Could he not learn the way to die,

Transfigured with some radiant Why?
From the same wells of hero-stuff,
He still might draw duress enough
To dare and suffer,—be, and build;
Till some far flaming Dream fulfilled,
Made the loud song in every vein
Sing triumph to her, for her pain;
Triumph, of one more glorious way
Than plunder for a beast of prey;
Triumph at last, against all odds
Set up by the indifferent gods!

Man-child,—the starveling without help,
Less able than a tiger's whelp,—
Housed only, once, in her embrace,
Weak bud of the destroying race!
O fool and blind, and battled for,
Whose strength is this you spill in war,
But hers?—Who laughed the stars to scorn,
When you were born.—
When you were born.

MOTHER AND CHILD AT THE CAPITOL

June, 1921

Grace Guille Purse

Where is the soldier? The "Unknown,"
We've come so far to see?
Sleeping beneath this flag, my son,
Sleeping securely.

Why does the soldier sleep? 'Tis day
And all the people wait.
While all the people slept, my son,
He watched, with Death, his mate.

But who is death? And where is he,
Now that the soldier's here?
Conquered, though conquering, he stands
Beside the Soldier's bier.

And when I am a soldier grand
Will death come back again?
My son—My son—God grant this day
Brings not its gift in vain!

THE SERVICE STAR

To R. H. C.

KENNETH W. PORTER

She saw in the window a single star
And said: "I see you've a son in the war
For the freedom of the earth.
And where is he?" The mother replied
In a voice that was taut as a bow with pride:
"He is in Fort Leavenworth."

THE STARRED MOTHER

ROBERT WHITAKER

Is there a madness underneath the sun
More strange, more terrible? or any one
More pitiful than this, that for a star
A mother sells her flesh and blood to war?

A son for slaughter, and a star for praise!
Nor this the total madness of our days,
A son to slay some other mother's son,
And by such murder mother's blessing won!

The Hindu mother, by the Ganges tide
Drowning her babe, heart-broken, but with pride,
Poor blind purveyor to a Saurian feast,
Still spares her babe from murder's maw, at least.

Is there debauchery more deep than this?
The State betraying mothers with a kiss?
Bribing the Marys of the world to sell,
For tinselled star, their flesh and blood to hell!

WARRIOR MOTHERS

Fanny Bixby Spencer

You wait as I for the fatal word
From the bare steel line where the death-ghoul lures.
Your pulse bounds up by the same thought stirred;
Will your son kill mine or will mine kill yours?

For you and I in our thoughts are brave
While pride beguiles and loud boast assures;
But blank fear skulks by the sky-topped grave.
Will your son kill mine or will mine kill yours?

Oh, the blood-laugh rings on the wind tonight
As blind time revels and rage endures.
You're knitting too by the pale lamp light.
Will your son kill mine or will mine kill yours?

Your soul hates me as my soul hates you,
For wrath-lit passion all else obscures,
And our hearts death-gripped fight the grim fight through
Will your son kill mine or will mine kill yours?

WOMEN OF WAR

Lucia Trent

Women, who lust for blood and harbor hate,
Who drive your men on branded spikes of fate
To die in terror on a blood-drenched sod
To the extortionate glory of your God,
How do you dare to hold a sacred place
And claim to be the mothers of the race?
How can you heal and cleanse with heart and mind
The old recurrent blunders of mankind,
Cherish a rebel longing in your breast
To right each wrong and grievance unredressed?
Oh, we who follow where true mothers lead
Pity the fruit of your unhallowed seed!

NOTHING

FANNY BIXBY SPENCER

There is nothing ahead on the scarlet path,
For wilted the glories fade
When stands revealed to the lighted mind
The shame of the cannonade.

There are nothing but shrouds in your knitting hands,
O women. Look up and see
That the death-forged shackles of crumbling time
Are the bonds of your loyalty.

There is nothing to gain from the belching guns
That deadlock the riven earth;
For nothing but hell is the mad exchange
For the boon of an age-long dearth.

GLORY OF WOMEN

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You made us shells. You listen with delight,
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.

You can't believe that British troops "retire"
When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

BREED, WOMEN, BREED

Lucia Trent

Breed, little mothers, with the tired backs and the tired hands,
Breed for the owners of mills and the owners of mines.
Breed a race of danger-haunted men,
A race of sweating, toiling, miserable men.
Breed, little mothers,
Breed for the owners of mills and the owners of mines.
Breed, breed, breed!

Breed, little mothers, with the sagging cheeks and the sunken eyes,
Breed for the bankers, the crafty and terrible masters of men,
Breed a race of machines,
A race of ænemic, round-shouldered, subway-herded machines.

Breed, little mothers, with a faith patient and stupid as cattle,
Breed for the war lords.
Offer your woman flesh for incredible torment,
Wrack your frail bodies with the pangs of birth
For the war lords who slaughter your sons!

Breed, little mothers,
Breed for the owners of mills and the owners of mines,
Breed for the bankers, the crafty and terrible masters of men,
Breed for the war lords, the devouring war lords,
Breed, women, breed!

HERITAGE

Laura Helena Brower

I see the gallows—O my son! My child!—
That has been built for you. Not with these eyes,
These wretched, human eyes, so dimmed and worn
With tears unceasing since I learned your fate,
Your crime, your guilt, your plea, your punishment;
But with the clear, sad vision of a soul
Remorse-wrung for the sin that mothered yours.
O God! If they could know, could understand,
Those twelve men stern and silent, who condemned,
The judge whose icy voice pronounced your doom,

The careless, jeering crowd that thronged the court,—
O God! If they could know that mine, mine, mine,
The mother's sin, sinned ere your birth, has brought
You, it and it alone, to this dread place,
The gallows' foot!
For you were born—nay, more,—
Conceived when all the world was torn with war
And mad with hate that slaked its blood-thirst
In a brother's blood. And you were fatherless
From birth. The kind, wise voice, the strong firm hand.
The father's hand that would have led you up,
Far from the road on which your feet have strayed,
That voice was stilled, that hand lay cold in death.
Too well the deadly shrapnel's work was done.
And, helpless child, what could you do but drink
The poison of the hate that orphaned you,
And the worse poison of the hate within my breast
Alike for those whose work this was, and those
Who, weeping, came to tell me he was dead.
Ours, then, the guilt,—not yours, but his and mine—
That we had bidden you, you sinless child,
To come to birth in such unhallow'd hour.
How *dared* we love when all around was envy, greed
For power that mocked the rights of weaker men,
And bitter loathing finding vent in war?
How dared *we* love when love's sweet fruit must be
Heart-cankered?
You guilty? No! No more than when
They laid you first upon my widowed breast,
And heard, unheeding, all the curses wild
I heaped on those who made you fatherless.

Not guilty, judge and jury, though condemned,
Not guilty, but the blighted fruit of war!

IX

CHRIST AND WAR

CHRIST AT EIGHT

ERNEST HARTSOCK

Little boy, gentle boy,
  Why so desolate?
Has Heaven's proselyting joy
  Converted you to hate?

Little lad with lips that lace
  Like a butterfly,
Has that amaranth your face
  Learned that flowers die?

Why do you look so quaintly wise,
  Gold-haired little Master?
What sunken shadow traps your eyes
  In delicate disaster?

Little lad, have Heaven's guns
  Hushed your earnest prattle?—
Who told you, Lad, God raises sons
  To slay them all in battle!

SHEEP

WALTER HENDRICKS

Think of the child who owns a sheep
Which he may love but may not keep,
A friend that from his side is torn,
Which he must see to market borne!

Think of the one who bears strong sons
Only to give to feed to guns,
Or give to murder other men
They see but once and never again!

Think of the Lamb of God once slain
Who sacrificed his life in vain!

THE LOST SINGER

SCUDDER MIDDLETON

In the olive Orient,
Up and down Jerusalem streets
He sang his poems.

She who lived in Magdala,
Fisherman of Galilee,
Blind and poor from Jericho,
Lepers out of Bethany,
Children, scholars, thieves—
What a motley crew
Loved the singing Jew!

Now the bayonet is there,
And the gun—
Maybe on the very corner where they met.

And the sun
Looks down upon the smoke.
Saladin is in the dust,
Richard camps on Olivet.

Where are halo, thorn and staff,
That cloak like Himalayan snow?

THREE HILLS

EVERARD OWEN

There is a hill in England,
  Green fields and a school I know,
Where the balls fly fast in summer,
  And the whispering elm-trees grow,
    A little hill, a dear hill,
  And the playing fields below.

There is a hill in Flanders,
  Heaped with a thousand slain,
Where the shells fly night and noontide
  And the ghosts that died in vain,—
    A little hill, a hard hill
To the souls that died in pain.

There is a hill in Jewry,
  Three crosses pierce the sky,
On the midmost He is dying
  To save all those who die,—
    A little hill, a kind hill
  To souls in jeopardy.

SEEN ON A WAR SHRINE IN PENNSYLVANIA

E. M. Greeves-Carpenter

Silent and unbetrayed, a carven rood
Within a niche of stone I could descry
Amid the sheltering trees, as I drew nigh
A little space in a green solitude.
But where of old, with anguished fortitude
At Christ's right hand his Mother watched Him die,
Now, a bright crown of laurel holding high—
Fair honor's sign—a soldier's figure stood.
Then I bethought with what perceiving grace
How hands bereaved anew the tale thus told,
How in His Mother's heart her Son gave place
To broken men and grave: "Thy Son behold!"
And how for all men's sorrows He yet mourns,
Whose crown of victory followed cross and thorns.

MADONNA IN FLANDERS

Ernest Hartsock

Drunk as the glamor of disgrace
A torpid shadow scars her face;
Golgotha seems her star-veiled skull;
Her eyes glow dull and pitiful.

As like the ghoul of God she picks
From tumid fields bouquets of sticks,
And mourns that such blooms leaped from seeds
Too rich for these trite paeans of weeds.

Alas, that Lust had crucified
New Gods in every man who died,
And made the cross the signpost of
The street to Hate, not the road to Love. . . .

Sad Mother of immortal sons,
No wonder your quaint weeping runs
Like laughter of infernal nuns
In convents of oblivions.

No wonder Hell delights to hear
Opposing prayers for vengeance rear
Their hydra heads in pious guise
To the sad Monarch of the skies.

There is more pleasure stirred in Hell
For each fair youth the Christians fell
Than for a million men who sin
Against a moral discipline.

It is not strange, it is not queer
That Hell is quenched with Heaven's tear;
It is not strange, it is not odd
That Satan's laughs are the groans of God.

It is to mourn, it is to weep
That God gives his beloved sleep;
It is to smile, it is to laugh;
Hell's joke is Heaven's epitaph.

THE WOODEN CHRIST

MARTHA FOOTE CROW

At the high ridge
Of a wide war-stricken realm
There stands an ancient wooden Christ.

Hollow the tottering image towers,
Eyeless and rotten, and decrepit there,
His smile a cruel twist.
Within the empty heart of this old Christ
Small stinging insects build their nests;
And iron-hearted soldiers cross themselves
The while they pass
The hollow-hearted figure by.

I think there is no Christ left there
In all those carnage-loving lands
Save only this of hollow wood
With wasp nests
Hiving in its heart.

THE BEGGAR

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

When the ships blow up and the towers fall down,
There dogs mankind, through lane and town,
A querulous Beggar in a Syrian dress,
Telling the story of his wan distress:
He dogs the market-place, he dogs church-door,
The wagons and the wharves from shore to shore;
"A penny, a penny," he crieth his lack
Down a million miles of the railroad track;
The cottages of all the lands make one row;
And the gatemen at the shops daren't bid him go;
And the bank-grills open as his steps advance,
And he walks right up through the roses and the dance. . . .
And I saw him one morning in Trafalgar Square,
And when I loafed at Lemnos, he was there!

Though he is not blind, nor has a wooden leg,
Yet the people all would shudder were he not to beg . . .
And he lifts you his palm and his one song old:
"My children . . . are hungry . . . my children . . . are cold!"
When the great Dam bursts and the Red River runs,
And the earthquake smites, and the Forests are asmoke,
And a hundred leagues of Cannon char earth to a coke,
Hear the wailing of the Beggar in the Galilæan cloak—
For the wailing of the Beggar is louder than the guns. . . .
As he lifts you his palm and his one song old:
"My children . . . are hungry . . . my children . . . are cold!"

It was on Broadway that I saw him last,
Where the roof-signs flare on cornice and mast.

ABOVE THE BATTLE'S FRONT

VACHEL LINDSAY

Oh foolish people, and without understanding;
that have eyes and see not.

St. Francis, Buddha, Tolstoi, and Saint John—
Friends, if you four, as pilgrims, hand in hand,
Returned, the hate of earth once more to dare,
And walked upon the water and the land,

If you, with words celestial, stopped these kings
For sober conclave, ere their battle great,
Would they for one deep instant then discern
Their crime, their heart-rot, and their fiends' estate?

If you should float above the battle's front,
Pillars of cloud, of fire that does not slay,
Bearing a fifth within your regal train,
The Son of David in his strange array—

If, in his majesty, he towered toward Heaven,
Would they have hearts to see or understand?
. . . Nay, for he hovers there to-night we know,
Thorn-crowned above the water and the land.

THE LORD CHRIST CAME TO NOTRE DAME

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

The Lord Christ came to Notre Dame;
  Unseen within the shadows there,
He heard the high resounding psalm,
  The chanted immemorial prayer;
From a far wandering He had come,
The length and breadth of Christendom.

'Twas Christmas Eve; a solemn mirth
  Filled the great fane with music sweet,
Singing the gladness of His birth.
  The snow was falling in the street,
  The world went by with homeless feet.

"Peace and good will . . ." Beneath His hood
The tears stole down—His dream of good
How little had men understood,
How often, calling on His name,
Had these old streets run wild with flame,
And yonder river roared with blood!

Slaying each other for His sake,
Marching for Him with fife and drum,
Building with fagot and with stake
The gentle-hearted world to come,
With torture a new earth to make,
And call it Christendom;
With fury to make fury cease,
Dancing in blood, sweet land of France,
To teach the nations how to dance,
And out of murder to bring peace;
Forging new chains to make men free,
And call it Liberty.

The Lord Christ came to Notre Dame;
From a far wandering He had come,
The length and breadth of Christendom,
And whereso'er His feet had trod,
Men, in the holy name of God,
Warred on each other, crying "Peace,"
Warring, they cried, that war should cease.
The Lord Christ bowed His head, and smiles
Brightened His tears, for in His breast,
From the sea's multitudinous miles,
A dove had lighted and taken rest.

Then fell a hush, and in the place
Of the Lord Cardinal His face
Shone strangely, the strange face of Love,
And on His lifted hand the dove.
Stilled was the high-resounding psalm,
And then, omnipotently calm,
The Lord Christ spake in Notre Dame:
"Be they for evermore abhorred
Who calling upon Christ their Lord
Shall ever draw again the sword!"
So spake Lord Christ in Notre Dame.

CHRISTMAS, 1917

Brent Dow Allinson

Is it a mocking jest that Christmas bells
Chime in this tragic hour of strife and pain,
That in the misery of conflicting wills
Breathless, men whisper words of love again?

Is it a jest that Europe's stainless snows
In beauty mask her burning, bleeding scars,
Where man's blaspheming thunder comes and goes?—
Is this unholiest his last of wars?

Is this the freedom that we bought so dear,—
To live among the wolf-pack in a cage,
Spurr'd by a Sycorax to hate and fear—
Ingenious brutes that cower and kill and rage?

Have we no further end, no nobler plan,
No subtler vision and no bolder will?
Is this the creature that we called a man?
Is this the jungle that we live in still?

Be dumb! ye bells, nor wake the frosty air
With joyful clamor while the nations bleed;
Let sorrow's silence speak a people's prayer
Whose legion'd sons lie crucified by greed.

Be dumb, sweet bells: or ring more wild and clear,
Proclaim a sunrise on youth's Calvary!
Ring out the madness with the dying year,
Let nations pass so Man himself be free.

MAKING CANNON IN BETHLEHEM

Vincent G. Burns

It was long ago in Bethlehem town,
  Where a holy child in a manger lay,
That an angel choir came winging down
  To be heard by the shepherds (so they say),
Singing sweet anthems of joy and release,
Of good-will to men and eternal peace.

And the child grew up to a princely man;
With the strange, keen wisdom of the poet-soul
He hated the greed of the autocrat's plan,
And championed the cause of a world made whole.
He saw with a vision of matchless scope
The new earth beaming in the Age of Hope.

But the years that have gone since then and now
Have been filled with clamor and pain and strife;
And men still choose the sword for the plow,
Prize place and power more than brother's life.
O the years between have been bloody indeed,
Since we turned our backs on his light and creed.

And now in the land where new hope should dwell,
With science and art and culture untold,
Where heaven might rise men again build hell
With the ancient, feverish fight for gold.
So Bethlehem town in the U. S. A.
Is a town where men make great guns to slay.

In dingy shacks on the side of a hill,
Where green grass is stranger and soot is friend,
New Christs are born for the work of the mill;
Where the gruelling labor that knows no end
Gives birth to the steel for the cannon's strife
In the Bethlehem of the new world's life.

On the hill of our years the old Cross is seen,
Still Christ is a broken and bleeding thing;
To fatten his purse or vent his spleen
Man stops not at killing, or anything.
What in the world can be holy to them
Who would name such a hell-hole Bethlehem?

When will the wisdom of the Child be heard,
The healing voice of the Son of Man,
Teaching the peoples with the great one Word,
Building the future with the one right Plan?
Hear, O ye nations! Let your murder cease:
The great Word is Love, the right Plan is Peace!

A PRAYER OF THE PEOPLES

PERCY MACKAYE

God of us who kill our kind!
Master of this blood-tracked Mind
Which from wolf and Caliban
Staggers toward the star of man—
Now, on Thy cathedral stair,
God, we cry to Thee in prayer!

Where our stifled anguish bleeds
Strangling through Thine organ reeds,
Where our voiceless songs suspire
From the corpses in Thy choir—
Through Thy charred and shattered nave,
God, we cry on Thee to save!

Save us from our tribal gods!
From the racial powers, whose rods—
Wreathed with stinging serpents—stir
Odin and old Jupiter
From their ancient hells of hate
To invade Thy dawning state.

Save us from their curse of kings!
Free our souls' imaginings
From the feudal dreams of war;
Yea, God, let us nevermore
Make, with slaves idolatry
Kaiser, King or Czar of Thee!

We who, craven in our prayer,
Would lay off on Thee our care—
Lay instead on us Thy load;
On our minds Thy spirit's goad,
On our laggard wills Thy whips
And Thy passion on our lips!

Fill us with the reasoned faith
That the prophet lies who saith
All this web of destiny,
Torn and tangled, cannot be
Newly wove and redesigned
By the Godward human mind.

Teach us: so, no more to call
Guidance supernatural
To our help, but—heart and will—
Know ourselves responsible
For our world of wasted good
And our blinded brotherhood.

Lord, our God! to whom from clay,
Blood and mire, Thy peoples pray—
Not from Thy cathedral stair
Thou hearest:—Thou criest through our prayer
For our prayer is but the gate:
We, who pray, ourselves are fate.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

VACHEL LINDSAY

The Name of God be not blasphemed.

This is the sin against the Holy Ghost:—
To speak of bloody power as right divine,
And call on God to guard each vile chief's house,
And for such chiefs, turn men to wolves and swine:—

To go forth killing in White Mercy's name,
Making the trenches stink with spattered brains,
Tearing the nerves and arteries apart,
Sowing with flesh the unreaped golden plains.

In any church's name, to sack fair towns,
And turn each home into a screaming sty,
To make the little children fugitive,
And have their mothers for a quick death cry,—

This is the sin against the Holy Ghost:
This is the sin no purging can atone:—
To send forth rapine in the name of Christ:—
To set the face, and make the heart a stone.

THE SWORDLESS CHRIST

PERCY ADAMS HUTCHISON

Ay, down the years behold he rides,
The lowly Christ, upon an ass;
But conquering? Ten shall heed the call,
A thousand idly watch him pass.

They watch him pass, or lightly hold
In mock lip-loyalty his name:
A thousand—were they his to lead!
But meek, without a sword, he came.

A myriad horsemen swept the field
With Attila, the whirlwind Hun;
A myriad cannon spake for him,
The silent, dread Napoleon.

For these had ready spoil to give,
Had reeking spoil for savage hands;
Slaves, and fair wives, and pillage rare:
The wealth of cities: teeming lands.

And if the world, once drunk with blood,
Sated, has turned from arms to peace,
Man hath not lost his ancient lusts;
The weapons change; war doth not cease.

The mother in the stifling den,
The brain-dulled child beside the loom,
The hordes that swarm and toil and starve—
We laugh, and tread them to their doom.

They shriek, and cry their prayers to Christ;
And lift wan faces, hands that bleed:
In vain they pray, for what is Christ?
A leader—without men to lead.

Ah, piteous Christ, afar he rides!
We see him, but the face is dim;
We that would leap at crash of drums
Are slow to rise and follow him.

THE CAPTAINS OF THE YEARS

ARTHUR MACDOUGALL, JR.

I watched the Captains
A-riding, riding
Down the years;
The men of mystic grip
Of soul, a-riding
Between a hedge of spears.

I saw their banners
A-floating, floating
Over all,
Till each of them had passed,
And Christ came riding
A donkey lean and small.

I watched the Captains
A-turning, staring,
Proud and set,
At Christ a-riding there—
So calmly riding
The Road men can't forget.

I watched the Captains
Dismounting, waiting—
None now led—
The Captains bowing low!
The Caesars waiting!
While Christ rode on ahead.

THE CONQUERORS

HARRY KEMP

I saw the conquerors riding by
With trampling feet of horse and men:
Empire on empire like the tide
Flooded the world and ebbed again.

A thousand banners caught the sun,
And cities smoked along the plain
And laden down with silk and gold
And heaped-up pillage groaned the wain.

I saw the Conquerors riding by,
  Splashing through loathesome floods of war—
The Crescent leaning o'er its hosts,
  And the barbaric scimitar—

And continents of moving spears,
  And storms of arrows in the sky,
And all the instruments sought out
  By cunning men that men may die!

I saw the conquerors riding by
  With cruel lips and faces wan:
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned
  There rode the Mongol Ghengis Khan.

And Alexander, like a god,
  Who sought to weld the world in one;
And Caesar with his laurel wreath;
  And like a thing from Hell the Hun;

And, leading like a star, the van,
  Heedless of upstretched arm and groan,
Inscrutable Napoleon went,
  Dreaming of empire, and alone. . . .

Then all they perished from the earth,
  As fleeting shadows from a glass,
And, conquering down the centuries,
  Came Christ the Swordless on an ass.

CÆSAR AND CHRIST

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

Proud Caesar came in strength of steel;
  The panoply of war was his.
At his command men poured forth life,
  The cities perished, nations fell.
He left as heritage a blood-stained tide;
  He came, he scorned, he slaughtered—
  And he died.

The meek Christ came, his strength the true,
A heart of love his panoply.
At his command men found their life,
The cities flourished, nations grew.
As heritage, the reign of peace he gives;
He came, he loved, he pitied—
And he lives.

WHERE IS THE REAL NON-RESISTANT?

VACHEL LINDSAY

Who can surrender to Christ, dividing his best with the stranger,
Giving to each what he asks, braving the uttermost danger
All for the enemy MAN? Who can surrender till death
His words and his works, his house and his lands,
His eyes and his heart and his breath?

Who can surrender to Christ? Many have yearned toward it daily.
Yet they surrender to passion, wildly or grimly or gaily;
Yet they surrender to pride, counting her precious and queenly;
Yet they surrender to knowledge, preening their feathers serenely.

Who can surrender to Christ? Where is the man so transcendent,
So heated with love of his kind, so filled with the spirit resplendent
That all the hours of his day his song is thrilling and tender,
And all of his thoughts to our white cause of peace
Surrender, Surrender, Surrender?

INVOCATION

S. A. DETHALL

Christ with the crown of thorns,
God on the cross with a smile,
Teach me your strength this hour,
Lend me your patience a while.
Sickened am I with men,
Gorged to their sodden souls,
Careless that hunger and death
Stalk thru the stretch of the poles.

Gripped in a horrible hate
Am I for the sated and fed;
Gibbering lords who plan
Wars where they weed us with lead.
View I the woe that shrieks
High as the Pleiades,
Then see the smug and the sleek,
Drones that are taking their ease.

Weary of reason and rote,
Blaspheming God or blind Fate,
So I must ask your aid,
Christ, in my hour of hate.
Christ, who was stoned, reviled,
Suffering the cross with a smile,
Here in my moment of pain,
Send me your strength for a while.

PRAYER FOR A WORLD HURT SORE

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Lord God, we lift to Thee
A world hurt sore,
Look down, and let it be
Wounded no more!

Lord, when this year is done
That wakes today
Many shall pray to Thee
Who do not pray;

Let all lips comfort them,
All hearts be kind,
They who this year shall leave
Their joys behind;

Give them Thy comforting,
Help them to know
That though their hopes are gone
Thou dost not go;

They who shall give for Thee
  Lover and son,
Show them Thy world set free,
  Thy battles done!

Lord God, we lift to Thee
  A world in pain,
Look down and let it be
  Made whole again!

CHRISTMAS, 1915

Percy Mackaye

Now is the midnight of the nations: dark
  Even as death, beside her blood-dark seas,
  Earth, like a mother in birth-agonies,
Screams in her travail, and the planets hark
Her million-throated terror. Naked, stark,
  Her torso writhes enormous, and her knees
  Shudder against the shadowed Pleiades,
Wrenching the night's imponderable arc.

Christ! What shall be delivered to the morn
  Out of these pangs, if ever indeed another
  Morn shall succeed this night, or this vast mother
Survive to know the blood-spent offspring, torn
  From her racked flesh?—What splendor from the smother?
What new-wing'd world, or mangled god still-born?

CHRIST IN FLANDERS

Lucy Whitmell

We had forgotten You, or very nearly—
You did not seem to touch us very nearly—
  Of course we thought about You now and then:
Especially in any time of trouble—
We knew that You were good in time of trouble—
  But we are very ordinary men.

And there were always other things to think of—
There's lots of things a man has got to think of—
  His work, his home, his pleasure, and his wife:
And so we only thought of You on Sunday—
Sometimes, perhaps, not even on a Sunday—
  Because there's always lots to fill one's life.

And all the while, in street or lane or by-way—
In country lane, or city street, or by-way—
  You walked among us and we did not see.
Your feet were bleeding as You walked our pavements—
How did we miss your footprints on our pavements?
  Can there be other folk as blind as we?

Now we remember: over here in Flanders—
(It isn't strange to think of You in Flanders)—
  This hideous warfare seems to make things clear.
We never thought about You much in England—
But, now that we are far away from England—
  We have no doubts, we know that You are here.

You helped us pass the jest along the trenches—
Where, in cold blood, we waited in the trenches—
  You touched its ribaldry and made it fine.
You stood before us in our pain and weakness—
We're glad to think You understand our weakness—
  Somehow it seems to help us not to whine.

We think about You kneeling in the garden—
Ah! God! the agony of that dread garden—
  We know You prayed for us upon the cross.
If anything could make us glad to bear it—
'Twould be the knowledge that You willed to bear it—
  Pain—death—the uttermost of human loss.

Though we forgot You—You will not forget us—
We feel so sure You will not forget us—
  But stay with us until this dream is past.
And so we ask for courage, strength and pardon—
    Especially, I think, we ask for pardon—
  And that You'll stand beside us to the last.

THE WHITE COMRADE

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

Under our curtain of fire,
Over the clotted clouds,
We charged, to be withered, to reel
And despairingly wheel
When the bugles bade us retire,
From the terrible odds.

As we ebbed with the battle-tide,
Fingers of red-hot steel
Suddenly closed on my side.
I fell and began to pray.
I crawled on my hands and lay
Where a shallow crater yawned wide;
Then—I swooned. . . .

When I awoke it was yet day.
Fierce was the pain of my wound;
But I saw it was death to stir,
For fifty paces away
Their trenches were.
In torture I prayed for the dark
And the stealthy step of my friend
Who, staunch to the very end,
Would creep to the danger zone
And offer his life as a mark
To save my own.

Night fell. I heard his tread,—
Not stealthy, but firm and serene,
As if my comrade's head
Were lifted from that scene
Of passion and pain and dread;
As if my comrade's heart
In carnage took no part;
As if my comrade's feet
Were set on some radiant street
Such as no darkness could haunt;
As if my comrade's eyes
No deluge of flame could surprise,
No death and destruction daunt,

No red-beaked bird dismay,
Nor sight of decay.
Then in the bursting shells' dim light,
I saw he was clad in white.
For a moment I thought that I saw the smock
Of a shepherd in search of his flock.
Alert were the enemy, too,
And their bullets flew
Straight at a mark no bullet could fail:
For the seeker was tall and his robe was bright;
But he did not flee nor quail.
Instead, with unhurrying stride,
He came,
And, gathering my tall frame,
Like a child in his arms . . .

Again I swooned;
And awoke
From a blissful dream
In a cave by a stream.
My silent comrade had bound my side.
No pain now was mine, but a wish that I spoke,—
A mastering wish to serve this man
Who had ventured through hell my doom to revoke,
As only the truest of comrades can.
I begged him to tell me how best I might aid him,
And urgently prayed him
Never to leave me, whatever betide;
When I saw he was hurt—
Shot through the hands that were clasped in prayer!
Then, as the dark drops gathered there
And fell in the dirt,
The wounds of my friend
Seemed to me such as no man might bear.
Those bullet-holes in the patient hands
Seemed to transcend
All horrors that ever these war-drenched lands
Had known or would know till the mad world's end.
Then suddenly I was aware
That his feet had been wounded, too,
And, dimming the white of his side
A dull stain grew.
"You are hurt, White Comrade!" I cried.
His words I already foreknew:
"These are old wounds," said he,
"But of late they have troubled me!"

PRAYER OF A SOLDIER IN FRANCE

Joyce Kilmer

My shoulders ache beneath my pack,
(Lie easier, Cross, upon His back.)

I march with feet that burn and smart,
(Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart.)

Men shout at me who may not speak,
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek.)

I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear,

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
Thine Agony of Bloody Sweat?)

My rifle hand is stiff and numb,
(From thy pierced palm red rivers come.)

Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land and sea,

So let me render back again
This millionth of Thy gift. Amen.

STILL THE CROSS

E. Merrill Root

Calvary is a continent
Today. America
Is but a vast and terrible
New Golgotha.

The Legion (not of Rome today)
Jests. The Beatitudes
Are called by our new Pharisees
Sweet platitudes.

We tear the seamless robe of love
With great-guns' lightning-jets;

We set upon His head a crown
Of bayonets.

"Give us Barabbas!" So they cried
Once in Jerusalem:
In Alcatraz and Leavenworth
We copy them.

With pageant and with soldiers still
We march to Golgotha
And crucify Him still upon
A cross of war.

Oh blasphemous and blind! shall we
Rejoice at Eastertide
When Christ is risen but to be
Recrucified?

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

ERNEST CROSBY

Talk, if you will, of hero deed,
  Of clash of arms and battle wonders;
But prate not of your Christian creed
  Preached by the cannon's murderous thunders.

And if your courage needs a test,
  Copy the pagan's fierce behavior;
Revel in bloodshed east and west,
  But speak not with it of the Saviour.

The Turk may wage a righteous war
  In honor of his martial Allah:
But Thor and Odin live no more—
  Dead are the Gods in our Valhalla.

Be what you will, entire and free,
  Christian or Warrior—each can please us;
But not the rank hypocrisy
  Of war-like followers of Jesus.

JOHN CHRISTIAN

WALTER HENDRICKS

John Christian knew the Bible page by page,
He was his own concordance unabridged.
And named and claimed himself God-privileged
To expound its meaning to this hell-born age.

No word in all the Book he would deny.
He'd sooner have hurled himself into the sea
Than tipped the parrot-perch of the letter *t*
Or stripped the star from the heaven of the *i*.

Yet, at the first fool-frenzied howl for war,
Thou shalt not kill and *Love your enemies*
By magic changed to other words than these,
And bore no sign of what they were before.

And Christian kept the laws of man and God
By killing Christ and spilling human blood.

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

FLOYD HARDIN

Help me, O Christ, to hold Thy Sacred Cross
  Above this trench, now strewn with human gore;
Nor grudge to pay the price of bitter loss;
  (That man is not quite dead,—I'll give him more!)

Help me to give my all, nor count the cost,
  (This trigger needs a little oil, I think;)
No part of love's sweet sacrifice is lost;
  (These dead men make a most unholy stink!)

The meaning of Thy Cross is sacrifice;
  (Some men die hard—just see that fellow shake!)
I'll bear Thy cross with Thee, I'll pay the price.
  (These bullets do the work and no mistake!)

He gave His blood that sinful men might live;
  (That edge is hardly sharp enough to cut);
Sustain me by Thy might and comfort give!
  (I'm standing on a piece of human gut!)

His holy words redeeming love proclaim;
(Just see those blood-stains on my bayonet!)
Whate'er I do, I'll do in Jesus' name;
(Is that the ninth or tenth one? I forget.)

Grant me to know the joy of Calvary;
(Hold steady now, more sport ahead, I guess!)
I'll sacrifice my all to make men free;
('Tis not so dull a game I must confess!)

Lord, if I die, clasp me in arms of love!
(Something is moving by that rusty can!)
Grant me an entrance into heaven above—
(His head appears!—thank God!—I've popped my man!)

THE WHITE CHRISTS

GUY FITCH PHELPS

The White Christs come from the East,
And they follow the way of the sun;
And they smile, as Pale Men ask them to
At the things Pale Men have done;
For the White Christs sanction the sum of things—
Faggot and club and gun.

Whine of the groaning car,
Caste, which divides like a wall;
Curse of the raw-sored soul;
Doom of the great and small;
The White Christs fashioned by Pale White Men
Sanction and bless it all.

Prophets of truth have said
That Afric and Ind must mourn;
And the children of Oman weep
Trampled and slashed and torn,
Keeping the watch with brown Cathay
Till the Black Christs shall be born.

FROM THE EARTH, A CRY

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

O Christ! and O Christ! In thy name the law!
In thy mouth the mandate! In thy loving hand the whip!
They have taken thee down from thy cross and sent thee to scourge the people;
They have shod thy feet with spikes and jointed thy dead knees with iron,
And pushed thee, hiding behind, to trample the poor dumb faces!

God! thou hast made man a test of Thyself!
Thou hast set in him a heart that bleeds at the cry of the helpless:
Through Thine infinite seas one world rolls silent,
Moaning at times with quivers and fissures of blood;
Divided, unhappy, accursed; the lower life good,
But the higher life wasted and split, like grain with a cankered root.
Is there health in thy gift of life, Almighty?
Is there grief or compassion anywhere for the poor?
If these be, there is guerdon for those who hate the wrong
And leap naked on the spears, that blood may cry
For truth to come, and pity, and Thy peace.
The human sea is frozen like a swamp; and the kings
And the heirs and the owners ride on the ice and laugh.
Their war-forces, orders and laws are the crusted field of a crater,
And they stamp on the fearful rind, deriding its flesh-like shudder.

Lightning! the air is split, the crater bursts, and the breathing
Of those below is the fume and fire of hatred.
The thrones are stayed with the courage of shotted guns.
The warning dies.
But queens are dragged to the block, and the knife of the guillotine sinks
In the garbage of pampered flesh that gluts its bed and its hinges.

Silence again, and sunshine. The gaping lips are closed on the crater.
The dead are below, and the landless, and those who live to labor
And grind forever in gloom that the privileged few may live.

But the silence is sullen, not restful. It behaves like a sea, and frets,
And beats at the roof till it finds another vent for its fury.
Again the valve is burst and the pitch-cloud rushes,—the old seam rends anew—
Where the kings were killed before, their names are hewed from the granite—
Paris, mad hope of the slave-shops, flames to the petroleuse!
Tiger that tasted blood—Paris that tasted freedom!
Never while steel is cheap and sharp, shall thy kinglings sleep without dreaming—
Never while souls have flame, shall their palaces crush the hovels.

Insects and vermin, ye, the starving and dangerous myriads,
List to the murmur that grows and growls! Come from your mines and mills,
Pale-faced girls and women with ragged and hard-eyed children,
Pour from your dens of toil and filth, out to the air of heaven—
Breathe it deep, and hearken! A Cry from the cloud or beyond it,
A Cry to the toilers to rise, to be high as the highest that rules them,
To own the earth in their life-time and hand it down to their children!

Emperors, stand to the bar! Chancellors, halt at the barracks!
Landlords and Lawlords and Tradelords, the specters you conjured have risen—
Communists, Socialists, Nihilists, Rent-rebels, Strikers behold!
They are fruit of the seed you have sown—God has prospered your planting. They come
From the earth, like the army of Death. You have sowed the teeth of the dragon!
Hark to the bay of the leader! You shall hear the roar of the pack
As sure as the stream goes seaward. The crust on the crater beneath you
Shall crack and crumble and sink, with your laws and rules
That breed the million to toil for the luxury of the ten—
That grind the rent from the tiller's blood for drones to spend—
That hold the teeming planet as a garden plot for a thousand—
That draw the crowds to the cities from the healthful fields and woods—
That copulate with greed and beget disease and crime—
That join these two and their offspring, till the world is filled with fear,

And falsehood wins from truth, and the vile and cunning succeed,
And manhood and love are dwarfed, and virtue and friendship
sick,
And the law of Christ is a cloak for the corpse that stands for
Justice!
—As sure as the Spirit of God is Truth, this Truth shall reign,
And the trees and lowly brutes shall cease to be higher than men.
God purifies slowly by peace, but urgently by fire.

CALVARY

JOHN ROTHSCHILD

An invisible chorus chants in the winter heavens.

Acres of crosses—wooden crosses—bleak
as bones—and gray as sorrow.

. . . . .

And some of them were crucified
In soul and body, and doubly died.
They who came dragging the cross of Hate.
They who came cursing to their Fate.

Who taught them to hate, who sent them to die?
'Twas you, ye women now shrunken with weeping!
'Twas you, ye men now broken and hoary,
who waved a flag and talked of glory!
When they went marching quick and bright,
When they went tramping off to fight—
and to kill
and to die.

And did you fear, ye stern-eyed men,
ye women knitting swollen-lidded?
Fear for the Spirit, and think that Force
Would save the world from some great loss?
Why did ye wager sin with sin?
Could ye not trust the spirit to win?

Acres of crosses—little crosses—row
on row—and gray as sorrow.

. . . . . .

When will you learn, ye folk of folly, how
wrath is weak, how patience is strong?
When will you learn the terrible power
of folded arms in the menacing hour?

MIDNIGHT: 1917

M. C. Sinclair

I drink my blood in secret grief, I weep,
I cry for truce, I dare not think for long
Of that which has befallen men. The wrong
Is too immense. I babble in my sleep
Of it. I try to think, to understand
And am engulfed in wild bewilderment,
And every frenzied thought is impotent
Against the awful thought of No-Man's Land!

And yet I do not die. I eat and drink,
I walk the earth, I wear a gown, I see
A rose; it is the same old world, I think.
But oh, it was not known before to me
How love and pity vanish as a breath
When Hate has loosed its hounds of Hell and Death!

GOD PRAYS

Angela Morgan

Last night I tossed and could not sleep.
When sodden heavens weep and weep,
As they have wept for many a day,
One lies awake to fear and pray.
One thinks of bodies blown like hail
Across the sky where angels quail;
One's sickened pulses leap and hark
To hear the Horror in the dark.

"What is Thy will for the people, God?
Thy will for the people, tell it me!
For War is swallowing up the sod
And still no help from Thee.

Thou who art mighty hast forgot;
And art Thou God or art thou not?
When wilt Thou come to save the earth
Where death has conquered birth?"

And the Lord God whispered and said to me,
"These things shall be, these things shall be,
Nor help shall come from the scarlet skies
Till the people rise!
Till the people rise, my arm is weak;
I cannot speak till the people speak;
When men are dumb, my voice is dumb—
I cannot come till my people come."

And the Lord God's presence was white, so white,
Like a pillar of stars against the night.
"Millions on millions pray to me
Yet hearken not to hear me pray;
Nor comes there any to set me free
Of all who plead from night to day.
So God is mute and Heaven is still
While the nations kill."

"Thy people have travailed much!" I cried
"I travail even as they," God sighed.
"I have cradled their woe since the stars were young.
My infant planets were scarcely hung
When I dreamed the dream of my liberty
And planned a people to utter me.
I am the pang of their discontent,
The passion of their long lament—
I am the Purpose of their pain,
I writhe beneath their chain."

"But Thou art mighty and need'st no aid.
Can God the Infinite be afraid?"

"They too are God yet know it not.
'Tis they not I who have forgot.
And War is drinking the living sod,"
Said God.

"Thy people are fettered by iron laws
And each must follow a country's cause,
And all are sworn to avenge their dead—
How may the people rise?" I said.

And then—God's face! It was white, so white,
With the grief that sorroweth day and night.
"Think ye I planted my Image there
That men should trample it to despair?
Who fears the throe that rebellion brings
Hath bartered God for the will of kings."

"Help them to stand, O Christ!" I prayed.
"Thy people are feeble and sore afraid."

"My people are strong," God whispered me,
"Broad as the land, great as the sea;
They will tower tall as the tallest skies,
Up to the level of my eyes
When they dare to rise.
Yea, all my people, everywhere!
Not in one land of black despair
But over the flaming earth and sea
Wherever wrong and oppression be
The shout of my people must come to me.
Not till their spirit break the curse
May I claim my own in the universe;
And this the reason of war and blood—
That men may come to their angelhood.
If the people rise, if the people rise
I will answer them from the swarming skies
Where Herculean hosts of might
Shall spring to splendor over night.
Blazing systems of sun and star
Are not so great as my people are,
Nor chanting angels so sweet to hear
As the Voice of the nations, freed from fear.
They are my mouth, my breath, my soul!
I wait their summons to make me whole."

All night I toss and I cannot sleep;
When shattered heavens weep and weep
As they have wept for many days
I know at last 'tis God who prays.

MIDNIGHT—THE 31ST OF DECEMBER, 1900 [1]

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

Lo! now on the midnight the soul of the century passing,
And on midnight the voice of the Lord!

* * * * * * * *

"In the years that shall be I will bind me nation to nation
And shore unto shore," saith our God.
"For this cause I will make of your warfare a terrible thing,
A thing impossible, vain;
For a man shall set his hand to a handle and wither
Invisible armies and fleets,
And a lonely man with a breath shall exterminate armies,
With a whisper annihilate fleets;
And the captain shall sit in his chamber and level a city,
The far-off capital city.
Then the Tsar that dreameth in snow and broodeth in winter,
That foiled dreamer in frost,
And the Teuton Emperor then, and the Gaul and the Briton
Shall cease from impossible war,
Discarding their glittering legions, armadas of iron,
As children toys that are old.
As a man hath been brought, I will bring unto judgment a nation;
Nor shall numbers be pleaded for sin.
And that people to whom I gave in commission the ocean
To use my waters for right,
Let them look to the inward things, to the searching of spirit,
And cease from boasting and noise.
Then nation shall cleave unto nation, and Babel shall fall;
They shall speak in a common tongue,
And the soul of the Gaul shall leap to the soul of the Briton
Through all disguises and shows;
And soul shall speak unto soul—I weary of tongues,
I weary of babble and strife.

Lo! I am the bonder and knitter together of spirits,
I dispense with nations and shores."

* * * * * * * *

"Lo! I am the burster of bonds and the breaker of barriers—
I am he that shall free," saith the Lord.
"For the lingering battle, the contest of ages is ending,
And victory followeth Me."

[1] Abridged.

RECESSIONAL

RUDYARD KIPLING

God of our fathers, known of old—
  Lord of our far-flung battle-line—
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
  The captains and the kings depart—
Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away—
  On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
  Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard—
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord! Amen.

X

THE GHOSTLY MARCHERS

THE BUGLER

A Case Study in the Psychology of War

LIN DAVIES

"I can't blow taps no more,"
He says to me.
(They'd kidded him outside the barracks door.)
"I used to do it pretty well before—
Before I played my buddy off. It's war,
But don't you see?

"The moon was full and white,
And shinin' free,
About the way it's shinin' there tonight.
We started up, and Buddy got it right—
A piece of shrap; it dropped him out the fight
Alongside me.

"We laid him in the clay;
And it was me
That sounded taps; there was no other way. . . .
I can't blow taps no more . . . but say!
I tapped a German skull the other day.
And that squares me!"

MATEY

Cambria, May 1915

PATRICK MACGILL

Not comin' back to-night, matey,
And reliefs are comin' through,
We're all goin' out all right, matey,
Only we're leavin' you.

Gawd! it's a bloody sin, matey,
Now that we've finished the fight,
We go when reliefs come in, matey,
But you're stayin' 'ere to-night.

Over the top is cold, matey,
You lie on the field alone,
Didn't I love you of old, matey,
Better than blood of my own?
You were my dearest chum, matey—
(Gawd! but your face is white)—
But now, though reliefs 'ave come, matey,
I'm goin' alone to-night.

I'd sooner the bullet was mine, matey,
Goin' out on my own,
Leavin' you 'ere in the line, matey,
All by yourself, alone.
Chum o' mine, and you're dead, matey,
And this is the way we part,
The bullet went through your head, matey,
But Gawd! it went through me 'eart.

DRUM TAPS TO HEAVEN

JAMES CHURCH ALVORD

Peter at Heaven's Gate wearied of the game
('Twas old folks, old folks, shivering up the stair),
Spindle shanks, wheezings, sparse and grizzled hair
When whooping, thundering, boys by millions came;
Blue eyes, black eyes, quivering eyes of flame
Short step, sharp step, swinging to a flare;
Torn breasts, rank hulks, through the shrapnel's glare.
Some were but shards and smears of the human frame;
Each lad looked down—he'd heard a mother cry.
Each lad turned back—he'd heard a maiden sigh.
Peter did know—tows to the number seven.
(For these mad feet had danced the rigadoons of earth,
These shouting mouths had kissed beneath pale moons of earth),
"Brave boys," he laughed, "we'll have some life in Heaven!"

Rat-a-tat—rat-a-tat—tir-r-r-rah!
Rat-a-tat—rat-a-tat—tir-r-r-rah!
Rat-a-tat—rat-a-tat—tir-r-r-rah—tir-r-r-rah—tah-tah!

Flat yellow faces watched the sunset skies
(Sharp elbows nudged and eyes grew boldly rude);
While the grim twilight blotched with crimson, crude
Blood-drip of white boys storming Paradise.
Old yellow peoples saw their day rise:
Straight legs, quick brains, hashed to cannon-food;
Lame lungs, weak wits, left to breed the brood.
Grunted the Orient, mocking, bland, and wise:
"Clang up the gold gates on husky daddies gone,
Rickets and drivel in your homes are born.
Bribe us to churches, bully us to schools,
Your weaklings shall not cheat us in the marts of earth,
Your weaklings shall not strap us to the carts of earth,
O, blond-haired, blue-eyed, Nordic Race of Fools!"

Rat-a-tat—rat-a-tat—tir-r-r-rah!
Rat-a-tat—rat-a-tat—tir-r-r-rah!
Rat-a-tat—rat-a-tat—tir-r-r-rah—tah-tah!

THE METAL CHECKS

Louise Driscoll

Scene: a bare room, two shaded windows at the back, a fireplace between them with a fire burning low. A wooden table is piled with small trays. Death, the Counter, sits at the table, clad in a loose gray robe, his face partly concealed by a gray veil. The Bearer is the World, robed in soiled brown and green, carrying on his back a gunny-sack full of metal disks, the identification checks of slain common soldiers.

The Bearer

Here is a sack, a gunny sack,
A heavy sack I bring.
Here is toll of many a soul—
But not the soul of a king.

This is the toll of common men,
Who lived in the common way;
Lived upon bread and wine and love,
In the light of the common day.

This is the toll of the working men,
Blood and brawn and brain.
Who shall render us again
The worth of all the slain?

(*As the Counter speaks, the Bearer pours out the disks on the table.*)

The Counter

Pour them out on the table here.
Clickety—clickety—clack!
For every button a man went out,
And who shall call them back?
Clickety—clickety—clack!

One—two—three—four—
Every disk a soul!
Three score—four score—
So many boys went out to war.
Pick up that one that fell on the floor—
Didn't you see it roll?
That was a man a month ago.
This was a man. Row upon row—
Pile them in tens and count them so.

The Bearer

I have an empty sack.
It is not large. Would you have said
That I could carry on my back
So great an army—and all dead?

(*The Bearer lays the sack over his arm and helps the Counter count.*)

The Counter

Put a hundred in each tray—
We can tally them best that way.
Careful—do you understand
You have ten men in your hand?
There's another fallen—there—
Under that chair.

(*The Bearer restores it.*)

That was a man a month ago;
He could see and feel and know.
Then into his throat there sped
A bit of lead.
Blood was salt in his mouth; he fell
And lay amid the battle wreck.
Nothing was left but this metal check—
And a wife and child, perhaps.

(*The Bearer's bag troubles him. He inspects it.*)

The Bearer

What can one do with a thing like this?
Neither of life nor death it is!
For the dead serve not, though it served the dead.
The wounds it carried were wide and red,
Yet they stained it not. Can a man put food,
Potatoes or wheat, or even wood
That is kind and burns with a flame to warm
Living men who are comforted—
In a thing that has served so many dead?
There is no thrift in a graveyard dress,
It's been shroud for too many men.
I'll burn it and let the dead bless.

(*He crosses himself and throws the sack in the fire. The Counter piles tray upon tray of checks. The Bearer turns from the fire, and indicating the checks, speaks more slowly.*)

Would not the blood of these make a great sea
For men to sail their ships on? It may be
No fish would swim in it, and the foul smell
Would make the sailors sick. Perhaps in Hell
There's some such lake for men who rush to war
Prating of glory, and upon the shore
Will stand the wives and children and old men
Bereft, to drive them back again
When they seek haven. Some such thing
I thought the while I bore it on my back
And heard the metal pieces clattering.

The Counter

Four score—five score—
These and many more.
Forward—march!—into the tray!
No bugles blow today,
No captains lead the way;
But mothers and wives,
Fathers, sisters, little sons,
Count the cost
Of the lost;
And we count the unlived lives,
The forever unborn ones
Who might have been your sons.

The Bearer

Could not the hands of these rebuild
That which has been destroyed?
Oh, the poor hands! that once were strong and filled
With implements of labor whereby they
Served home and country through the peaceful day.
When those who made the war stand face to face
With these slain soldiers in that unknown place
Whither the dead go, what will be the word
By dead lips spoken and by dead ears heard?
Will souls say King or Kaiser? Will souls prate
Of earthly glory in that new estate?

The Counter

One hundred thousand—
One hundred and fifty thousand—
Two hundred—

The Bearer

Can this check plough?
  Can it sow? can it reap?
Can we arouse it?
  Is it asleep?

Can it hear when a child cries?—
  Comfort a wife?
This little metal disk
  Stands for a life.

Can this check build,
  Laying stone upon stone?
Once it was warm flesh
  Folded on bone.

Sinews and muscle firm,
  Look at it—can
This little metal check
  Stand for a man?

The Counter

One—two—three—four—

WHO WON THE WAR?

D. A. Wilson

Who won the war?
"I" mutters Foch,
"For I hammered the Boche,
I won the war, I won the war!"

All the women of the world, tho forever they were weeping
Could never waken one of the dead men sleeping.

Who won the war?
"We" say the Yanks,
"With machine guns and tanks,
We won the war, we won the war!"

All the women of the world, tho forever they were weeping
Could never waken one of the dead men sleeping.

Who won the war?
Silent the dead,
By them naught is said,
They won the war, they won the war!

All the women of the world, tho forever they were weeping
Could never waken one of the dead men sleeping.

Who won the war?
Nothing was won,
Yet the world was undone,
Damned is the war, Damned is the war!

All the women of the world, tho forever they were weeping
Could never waken one of the dead men sleeping.

ROBBED

The Senate repudiates the whole League of Nations idea.—Senator Lodge

ETHELEAN TYSON GAW

I rode at dawn a chevalier of God,
  Lifting the blazon of a glad new day;
  At golden dusk all gladly down I lay
On Flanders Field, beneath the trampled sod,
My winding sheet a starry web of dreams,
  Its woof, a world made safe from war's red ban,
  Its warp, a deathless Brotherhood of Man,
Its purpled fringe of high hope's rainbowed gleams.

But knaves have stolen that knightly winding sheet,
  Twisting its strands to make a trap of lies.
    Scorned is the Splendid Quest, the Dream forgot.
Shroudless I sink in ultimate defeat,
  No chevalier of God on high emprise,
    But—so much cannon fodder left to rot.

THE WRAITHS

EDYTHE C. TONER

Hosts of the martyred dead!
In dreams I see them pass—
Pale, wistful shadows
In their march
Upon the soundless grass.
And gleaming with the lustre
Of a star strewn sky,
I see long rows
Of glistening stones
Which mark the place of rest
Of these
Who now pass by!

I hear no sound of music
But a muffled drum
Beating a slow retreat. . . .
A bugle in the distance

Calling: "Come!"
And back in the void they go,
These sad, reproachful young
And silent wraiths.

Then: From out the cool-gray depths
Of darkling forest glen
Which held these lads
Within its drear retreat
I hear a cry!
Ceaseless . . . Moaning . . . Wavering
. . . As the eternal billows' hollow beat
Upon the shore which bounds
The longing Sea
From out the melancholy distance
Floating . . . Echoing . . . Sighing
. . . Back to me!
"Why . . . Why . . . Why . . .
Should we who were so young
And so in love with life,
Thus die . . . Thus die?"

THE MARCH OF THE GHOSTS

VINCENT G. BURNS

Chattering, clattering, here they come!
With a shrieking fife and a funeral drum.
Some are headless and some are blind,
Some drag a shattered limb behind,
Some are carried and some must crawl,
Some have no limbs or face at all,
Some are foolish and some are mad,
Some are gallant—but all are sad!
Clattering, chattering, here they come,
Marking time to the Skeleton's drum!

Uproaring, imploring, these soldier ghosts
Are the broken and bleeding battle-hosts
Of the kings and commanders since time began,
Red grist of the war-mill of conqueror Man,
Dead toys of the war-men's age-long play,
Roman and Teuton and British prey.

Young men, old men—with slow, dull tread
Come the hapless, hopeless, betrayed dead!
Imploring, uproaring, these slaughtered hosts
Are an endless column of marching ghosts!

Bemoaning and groaning a horrible song,
They rattle their bones as they march along,
German and Frenchman, side by side,
Turk and Armenian—all who died,
With no regard to their native place,
With no respect to their flag or race,
Made angry foes at the battle-posts,
They now are brothers in the army of ghosts!
Bemoaning and groaning, the phantom throng
Moves down the ages with sorrowful song!

Enthralling, appalling, one clear voice cried,
"Have you forgotten the hosts who died?
Must you forever our dread ranks swell,
Brand men forever with the scars of hell?
Men of the nations let your sorrows be
Healed with the hand of fraternity;
Sealed with the symbol of the Son of Man
Pledge the peoples to the peaceful plan!"
Appalling, enthralling, comes one last plea,
"Let peace prevail through eternity!"

THE PHANTOM REVIEW

Omar Barker

Come phantom feet in the wind tonight and soundless drumbeats roll,
As a wistful host of shadow men come marching through my soul.
Death marches at the head of them, Death closes every file;
Dead men from every rank, and Death reviews them with a smile.
This is his endless army. He recruits it as he wills
From Armageddon through the years to France's bloody hills.
Tonight in grand review he brings his greatest regiment:
Men of the Marne, of Meuse-Argonne, those youthful sons you sent

Across the sea. Death in command, they grimly march again
Down through gray mists of memory and sorrow's silent rain.
Your son is there, and I can see my buddy with his squad:
Those seven men whose fearless death was a salute to God!
They march "Eyes right!" to Death tonight. Tomorrow they will pass
In deathless grand review, where crosses strew green plots of grass,
Down living lanes of memory, where Love and Grief and Pride
Are in each heart's reviewing stand, saluting side by side.
Thus once each year these and the rest who died as soldiers do,
From Death's encampment march again in silent grand review
Through every heart. Yet if we give them only flowers and tears
In our salute, what boots their ghostly tramping through the years?
O silent host of soldier dead, of wistful shadow men,
Our pledge, to ease the watch you tread, "It shall not be again!"

THE BOY IN ARMOR

He Speaks to the Gathered Nations

HERMANN HAGEDORN

Tremble, O world! Bow down! Cringe! Be afraid!
You look on ghosts! Not one alone! Ten thousand!
And yet again ten thousand, and again
Ten thousand, and again to the bleak rim
Of this dear earth where there could be such living,
Such labor and such climbing of green hills,
Ten thousand times ten thousand shapes—with eyes!
Eyes that are living, eyes that are fires! Young eyes!
They do not blink; they do not waver; they watch.
Bow down, bow down, bow down! Open your hearts! And hear!

We are your sons. You lured us to your homes
With talk of love and mirth and the high music
That the heart makes when it goes out with drums
Along the highway, celebrating love.
With warmth you lured us, with the hearth-fire blazing,
With open, clean hands, tables cleanly set,
White beds and books and birds and songs and friends
And mountain-tops to win and seas to conquer,
Green things to marvel at, far isles to long for—
With love you lured us and with loveliness!

Remember! Now that we are ghosts, remember!
You said no word of hate and slaughter!
Not one!
Of wars you breathed no blighting syllable!
You trumpeted the call of beauty down
The heavenly valleys and we heard and came.
You blew no harsh reveille of guns and battle.
You trapped our unborn innocence with love.

Tremble, for we have eyes!

We are your sons and we are ghosts. We came
To love, to labor, and to know. We died
Before we loved, *before* we learned to labor,
Before we knew more than the twice-told tales
You murmured to beguile our puzzled ears.
You cried across the worlds, and called us sons!
We came as sons, but what you made of us
Were bleeding shapes upon an altar, slain
To appease your god Inertia where he sits
Muttering dead words and chewing at old bones.
Because you would not think, we had to die!

We have been loyal. We have fought for you,
And suffered of the cold, and starved for you,
And miserably laid our bodies down
Before your idol, while the incense rose.
Weep not for us, but for your own trapped selves.
We died. And there you stand, no step advanced!
And after all, when you have set more millions
Beside our millions, and beside them yet
More millions of brave fellows who die well,
You still will have to wake some day—and *think.*
You will let many die ere you do that,
And yet the day will come.

Bow down, and hear! You have more sons than these;
And they have fancies and imaginings
And dauntless spirits and hearts made for love,
And clean hands and clean eyes and high desires.
They will go forth and die if you command
As we have died, since they love liberty
Even as we loved her and would give her cause
The only gift they are aware is theirs.
Wake, dreaming world! *Think,* oh gray world bewitched!
Out through untravelled spaces where no mind

Has dared to venture, let your sails be spread!
O world, there is another way to serve
Justice and liberty, than thus to fling
The glory and the wonder of young lives
Beneath the hoofs of horses! Send your soul
Into the earth and through the clouds to find it!
Remember, world, this is the age of wings!
Beyond the clouds the stars are, and the stars
Will not forever vainly wait the aeronaut
Who shall uncover laws to lift men up
More potent than the laws that drag men down.
Out of this grave, I cry, *The way to life*
Is not through death, nor the way to law through blood;
Not through the gates of hell is heaven reached!
There is another way, and you shall find it!

Dead eyes keep watch! You shall not sleep nor rest.
We died. And now you others who must live
Shall do a harder thing than dying is—
For you shall *think!* And ghosts will drive you on!

GHOSTS OF CONQUEST

ALBERT EDWARD CLEMENTS

We shall break the dry crust of this stale earth, batter it down to
a useless despair,
Temper it with white-blooded hate greater than the eyes of the sea
staring rigidly into the last typhoon;
Even fling black coal across its naked, foul-green spine,
And break it, break it, break it into everywhere!

For we are the ghosts of conquest. Throughout centuries as old
as the first startled yellow flame devouring soft wood,
We have been sulking beneath the weight of useless war crosses,
A weight so terrific, so like the futility of endless struggle on
struggle,
That it pulled upward from our embittered hearts with the in-
tangible strain
Of a heaven we could never attain.

Open world! Let us bite into your frightened lips with our skele-
ton teeth, let us feel your full breasts that we may squeeze
to disconsolate death their wealth
Gained with the drunken-lipped twist of lust and stealth.

Open your soul lest we spill the sea,
A shivering death of flaming ice, over your crooked eyes!
For we are tired of your eternal lies,
Of glory in death, of glorified conquest.

Now our grave is open, open as the sky before the first glaring
dark of a rumbling storm,
And we, the ghosts of unremitted conquest,
Setting crazily in the East, coming up wilding out of the West,
Are risen to choke you to the last death
Of steel-pointed hate. Long has the world
Waited for us to be hurled
Into your arms. Now we have come!
The skies are black, the sea is a rage of burning white and blue,
The moon is a glass of furious hell, laughing,
Laughing at you.

We have come!
Pain for our bayonets, blood for our drum.
Now we shall break you, earth,
Until we who died seem worth
All your barren greed and futility.
Glory! Glory on a horizon too black to stay!
Glory on ghosts of conquest for a year and a day!

APPARITIONS

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

Who goes there, in the night,
Across the storm-swept plain?
We are the ghosts of a valiant war—
A million murdered men!

Who goes there, at the dawn,
Across the sun-swept plain?
We are the hosts of those who swear:
It shall not be again!

THE MARCH

J. C. Squire

I heard a voice that cried, "Make way for those who died!"
And all the coloured crowd like ghosts at morning fled;
And down the waiting road, rank after rank there strode,
In mute and measured march, a hundred thousand dead.

A hundred thousand dead, with firm and noiseless tread,
All shadowy-grey yet solid, with faces grey and ghast,
And by the house they went, and all their brows were bent
Straight forward; and they passed, and passed, and passed, and passed.

But O there came a place, and O there came a Face
That clenched my heart to see it, and sudden turned my way;
And in the Face that turned I saw two eyes that burned,
Never-forgotten eyes, and they had things to say.

Like desolate stars they shone one moment, and were gone,
And I sank down and put my arms across my head,
And felt them moving past, nor looked to see the last,
In steady silent march, our hundred thousand dead.

XI

THE ARMISTICE

EVERYONE SANG

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Everyone suddenly burst out singing,
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on—on—and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away . . . O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless—the singing will never be done.

THE DAY

November 11, 1918

WITTER BYNNER

Not as they planned it or will plan again,
Those captains whose command was forged in Hell
Not as they promised for their terrible
Obedient horde, Teuton and Saracen,
Bulgar and Slav, not as they dreamed it then,
Masters of might with sobs for paeans to swell
Their darkening sway, but like a far-off bell
Undoing night, the day has come for men.

The people's day has dawned, a deeper sky
Than any day that ever rose from sea,
And more than any captain dared is won;
And this great light that opens carries high
Justice that none had dreamed, not even we
Who still are blind awhile, facing the sun.

COULD THEY BUT KNOW[1]

WILL CHAMBERLAIN

Could they but know—the countless heroes dead
Who sleep along the Marne and 'neath the wave,
Could they but know, who first and since have shed
Their warm, red blood—humanity to save;
Could they but know, as we, the living know,
That what they gave, all selfless and in pain,
To stem the tides of hell and nameless woe
Was not, thank God! a gift in vain:
I think the graves would be a little gay
Could they, the tenants, look upon this day.
Could they but view a ransomed world's delight
From where they slumber 'neath the crosses' line,
Could brush aside the dust that clogs their sight
And see our faces with the tears that shine. . . .
Could they who sank in trench and mud and cold,
Sank in the crashing and the hurricane
Of shot and hate-winged gases' belching fold,
Could they but know it was so far from vain—
O God! a quickness on their eyelids lay
And vision give our holy dead to-day.

ARMISTICE DAY

A Phantasy

JOHN J. WILLOUGHBY

The half-light of a raw November day:
A rainy sleet, glistening where street-lamps gleamed
Yellow and white—glowing—like jewels, they seemed
Broidery upon the garment of fog that lay,
Shroud-like, o'er London—
    In the deserted street
I paused a while, seeking to hear the beat
Of England's heart, those distant sounds that tell
Of hurrying traffic—life flooding within the veins
Of a great nation, that strives, and toils, and strains. . . .

[1] November, 1918.

And all at once it seemed a silence fell,
Breathless . . . expectant . . .
Now broken by the sound . . .
Of muffled music, dimmed by the fog, that bound
The earth more closely. . . . Nearer, and nearer, still,
The strains approached. . . . Nothing triumphal here;
A melody that spoke of pain and fear—
That clutched the heart, like fingers damp and chill:
And ever nearer, keeping the music's beat,
Approached the steady tramp of marching feet. . . .
Suddenly, thrusting thro' the yellow haze,
They came in view, a full battalion strong;
Section by section, silent and stern; no song;
No sound of laughter, as in other days
Might mark the passage of a regiment—
Only that wild refrain of dire lament.
And, as the leaders passed with heavy tread,
I saw that none bore arms—each marched arrayed
In tattered khaki, muddied, and torn, and frayed;
Rotten with age, and somewheres stained with red,
A rusty red, symbol of ancient hurt,
That matched too well the khaki's glaze of dirt. . . .
Now, as they passed, upon each face I gazed:
A face of suffering, each, deep lined with pain,
And ghastly white, or greying, as who had lain
Long in the tomb. I started back, amazed,
And, awe-struck, watched the terrible advance—
The DEAD that perished on the Fields of France!
A moment more, and, on a sharp command,
The march was stayed: whereon, with faltering mien,
I asked the nearest one, a lad, eighteen
Perhaps in life, no more, marked with the brand
Of war, and disillusion—"Say, what quest
Is yours, that you should leave a well-earned rest?"
"No rest for us!" he bitterly replied,
"For us who thought by sacrifice to make
Peace upon Earth; who for our Country's sake
Offered our youth and manhood . . . suffered . . . died!
The Land we loved, the Land we lost, to save,
Has fall'n in ashes round about our grave. . . .
So we must wait, chained to this mortal clay,
Until the world is clean, the strife is o'er—
Till Peace, and soft Contentment, as of yore,
Triumph o'er Greed! . . .

Only upon this day
At the eleventh hour, we keep, each year,
A tryst with one, Unknown, who waits us here." . . .
Obedient to the order, on again,
Section by section passed . . . Till all were hid
In the enfolding fog. . . .
And still, amid
The silence, I seemed to hear that wild refrain
That plays them ever on—
Till Peace shall reign;
Till front to front, fanned by the soft winds' kiss,
Shall echo, with a mighty voice . . . DISMISS!

REGARDING THE ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE ON ARMISTICE DAY

HENRY S. SALT

Small help from that famed Silence can we win;
One voiceless minute in a year of din:
Sham peace, fast followed by the noise anew
Of martial pomps and armies in review!
What charm to quell War's madness must be sought?
Brief spell of Silence? Nay! long spell of Thought!

AFTERMATH

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Have you forgotten yet? . . .
For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagged days,
Like traffic checked awhile at the crossing of city ways:
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow
Like clouds in the lit heavens of life; and you're a man reprieved to go,
Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.
But the past is just the same,—and War's a bloody game. . . .
Have you forgotten yet? . . .
Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at
Mametz,—
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sandbags on
parapets?
Do you remember the rats: and the stench
Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench,—
And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless rain?
Do you ever stop and ask, "Is it all going to happen again?"
Do you remember that hour of din before the attack,—
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then
As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?
Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads,—those ashen-gray
Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?
Have you forgotten yet? . . .
*Look up, and swear by the green of the Spring that you'll never
forget.*

REMEMBER AGAIN [1]

R. W. S.

Rain in the blackness. Stabs of flame in the blackness.
Whines and groans in the blackness.
Remember?
Remember again.

Rockets at dawn. Shells, come and gone.
Mists in the dawn.
Cheers in the dawn.
Remember?
Remember again.

Stillness at noon. Curses in the stillness of noon.
Writhing bodies at noon. Still bodies at noon.
Remember?
Remember again.

Flashing shovels at twilight. Prayers at twilight.
Dry-eyed men at twilight. Soul-twisted men at twilight.
Remember?
Remember again.

[1] Printed originally in the editorial column of the Boston Herald, with a note from the author, who described himself as a private in the army and asked that the verse be "put some place."

Time will pass. Crises will rise.
Remember?
Remember again.

LEST WE FORGET

Armistice Night—1920

Curtis Wheeler

The cold rain falls on Dun-sur-Meuse tonight.
My brothers of the Marne, do you fare well,
Where, by the ford, or on some wind-swept height
You lie among the hamlets where you fell?

Do you sleep well these wet November nights,
Where there is never any brushwood blaze
To cast within the dugout wavering lights,
And warm the chill of these benumbing days?

Romagne-sous-Montfaucon! The little towns
That scatter from the Somme to the Moselle,
Some silent sentry on their high-backed downs
Harks still to every far white church's bell—

The humble little church of misty hills,
Set where the white roads cross, with ruined fane,
Where, through the window-gaps with war-scarred sill,
A battered Christ looks out into the rain.

Silent, all silent to the passer-by,
Those lonely mounds, or rows of crosses white.
Beyond the need of bitter words they lie.
But are they silent to their friends tonight?

Can we stand whole before a crackling fire—
We, who have gone in peace year after year,
Singing and jesting, working again for hire—
Deaf to the message they would have us hear?

Not while the red of poppies in the wheat,
Not while a silver bugle on the breeze,
Not while the smell of leather in the heat,
Bring us anew in spirit overseas.

While stars of Alsace light the Vosges at night,
As long as Lorraine's cross shines in the sun,
While moons on Bar-le-Duc send bombers light,
Or rain drives down the gray road to Verdun,

So long shall we hear those we left behind,
Where eddying smoke fell like a mountain wraith,
And in the din that left us deaf and blind
We sensed the uttered message clear—"Keep faith."

To every man a different meaning, yet—
Faith to the thing that set him at his best,
Something above the blood and dirt and wet,
Something apart. May God forget the rest!

Lest we forget! The months swing into years,
Our souls are caught in trivial things again,
We laugh at what we once beheld with tears,
In petty strife we ease our souls their pain.

The cold rain falls in France! Ah! send anew
The spirit that once flamed so high and bright,
When, by your graves, we bade you brave adieu
When Taps blew so much more than just "Goodnight."

ARMISTICE DAY

Roselle Mercier Montgomery

I think I hear them stirring there, today,
Who have lain still
So long, so long, beside the Aisne and Loire,
On Verdun hill.

I think I hear them whispering, today,
The young, the brave,
The gallant and the gay—unmurmuring long,
There in the grave.

I think I hear them sighing there, today—
They sigh for all
The glory and the wonder that was life—
Beyond recall!

I think that their young eyes are wistfully
On us who go
So gayly to our sports, this holiday . . .
I think they know!

I think that they are listening today . . .
I feel them near!
Our orators declaim—they answer back,
"Why lie we here?"

Across the fleet, forgetting years it comes,
Today—their cry,
"O World, O World, if it was all in vain,
Why did we die?"

Above the earth's enduring hates, they ask,
"Was it—for this?"
I think they are remembering, this day
Of Armistice!

And oh, I think I hear them weeping there
Who should be sleeping . . .
A plaintive thing—to hear across the world
The young dead weeping!

NOVEMBER

Sophie Tunnell

The nuts are dropping in the wood,
The leaves are slowly drifting down,
The wild geese, shrilly honking, fly
Wedge shaped at dusk above the town;
But these are not the sounds—some sad, some sweet—
That I remember
For I still hear the tramp of marching feet
In November.

I do not care that asters die
Or sumac fades upon the hill;
That robins' nests hang empty now
And songs are frozen in the rill;
Old griefs that once I knew can cause no pain
Since I remember
The tramp of feet that come not home again
In November.

ARMISTICE

EUNICE MITCHELL LEHMER

We face the nations with one hand outstretched
In greeting, and with peace upon our lips;
But in our hearts a question, in our minds
The haunting echoes of the song of war.
The song that sets the world a-tremble still
And shakes the very pillars of our faith.

How long before the peace can pass our lips,
Can claim our minds and drive out old distrust?
To doubt mankind is but to doubt ourselves.
When shall our fingers dare to drop the sword,
While with unquestioning eyes we reach two hands
In open comradeship to all the world?

THE WAR AT HOME

WILLARD WATTLES

God of our fathers, with bowed heads we come
  In this glad hour when the unscathed rejoices,
Strike Thou each little boaster awed and dumb
  Before the flame of Pentecostal voices.
Our youth has stormed the hosts of hell and won;
  Yet we who pay the price of their oblation
Know that the greater war is just begun
  Which makes humanity the nations' Nation.

AT HALF-MAST

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

Fly the flag at half-mast
For the life that has been spilt,
For the wealth that has been built
  On the bones of men;
Fly the flag at half-mast
  Till the day breaks again.

Fly the flag at half-mast
For the greed that would not die,
For the hate that scorched the sky
With envenomed fire;
Fly the flag at half-mast
For the deeds of men's ire.

Fly the flag at half-mast
For the love that has been slain,
For the conflict's bloody stain
On the hopes of men;
Fly the flag at half-mast
Till the day breaks again.

ARMISTICE

Louis Untermeyer

The wintry war is over, and he stands
Bruised and bewildered there;
Stretching his thin and nervous hands
In the warm air.

The early glow's forgotten and instead
A softer tumult starts in every vein;
He feels like one a long time dead
Who lives again.

Fantastic dreams, strange wants assail him now;
He feels that he must burst in blossoms, rise
And thrust one great and jubilant bough
Into the skies.

He thinks of birds and sunlight, hopes to see
Earth as he knew it, prodigal and gay. . . .
And there he stands—an old, bent tree,
Leafless in May.

TO THE PREACHERS ON ARMISTICE DAY

Vincent G. Burns

O ye who preach about God's love to man,
Who speak the gospel of the crucified Friend,
The One who died so selflessly upon the Tree
That men might know the cause of sin upon the Earth:

O ye who preach about the one great Lover,
Listen to me:
What will you say on Armistice Day:
The Day a billion souls sighed gratitude to God?

Will you have sense to see the Truth?
Will you have Love to speak for man?
Will you be brave to say to folk:
"This day is history's most sacred day,
The day when men stopped slaughtering their brothers:
Today the ghosts of twenty million unknown boys
Command us to declare why they,
In Life's glad youth-time,
Had to die!

And this is why:
Because of the shameful pride of good rulers,
Because of the racial hate of Christian nations,
Because of the grasping gluttony of powerful rich-men,
Because of the ignorant blindness of intelligent people,
Because of the colossal folly of skillful diplomats:
That is why a generation's best are dead!"

O shepherd of the flock what will you say?
Will you too fear to speak the Truth,
Which you do know within your heart of hearts?
Will you mouth ancient platitudes
Or will you speak brave, agonizing Truth?
Will you pray this:
"God of our Humanity,
Forgive us these our sins,
Forgive our hate and greed and lust,
And give us sight and strength and will
To struggle free from bonds to loathesome Mammon,
To turn again to worship only Thee, the one true God,
In spirit humble and in heart sincere!
Give us the vision of a Brotherhood larger than America!
Give us the vision of a Justice wider than our own needs!
Give us the vision of a Truth deeper than our old illusions!
And hold us in the bond of peace
Eternally!"

So let us truly judge ourselves,
That we may see our own shortcomings,
That we may recognize our own sins and blunders
Which in the past have made God's Earth

A shambles and an holocaust!
Let us now forget our class or race,
Let us now forsake the way of death,
And with new meekness, new kindness and new courage
Now resolutely begin to build
The new world of Life that is to be!

O ye who preach that God is Love,
What will you do
This Armistice Day?

THE NEW SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Ralph B. Urmy

Teach the boys to shoot!—Rev. Mark A. Matthews

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child.
May I soon grow up to be
The finest shot on land or sea.

Make me love Thee more and more,
Teach my tender hands to war;
May my bayonet be bright,
Or dripping crimson in Thy sight.

Drive my bullets hard and straight,
Help me sing Thy hymn of hate,
May I kill mine enemies,—
Thy brethren dear, the least of these.

Let me be a soldier true,
Let me do what Thou wouldst do,
Spreading deadly gas around,
Making earth Thy hallowed ground.
Amen.

TO AN ETHICAL PREACHER

Brent Dow Allinson

Four-square against the genial tides of peace
He stands, Cock-Robin—wise in self-esteem,
Pronouncing his implacable decrees,—
Sir Oracle out-oracled—a stream

Of mordant and pontifical abuse
Descending in hot torrents from his tongue
As lava from Vesuvius. "No truce!"
He cries, "between the righteous and the wrong,
No truce but war incessant,—to the hilt—
Between the virtuous and the red-with-guilt!" . . .
And under every deep portentous breath:
"We are the right; their cause is Cain's!" he saith.

Behold him on the platform shake his sword,—
Our social darling and consummate child;
Or death-defying at the banquet-board
Sift Truth from Error and with gestures mild
Make hating virtuous for the sovereign State,
Define the duty of all moral men
To praise the war's "morale," and demonstrate
That God is with us in the slaughter-pen!

. . . . . .

O, valiant donor of another's tears,—
Thrice-bless'd of our war-gilded patrioteers,
Starvation-cordons and Youth's fear-drawn swords
Could never be but for your priceless words!

ANNIVERSARY

Headline, Norman, Oklahoma, Transcript, November 8, 1928: "Bomb to Call City to Prayer, Sunday."

ANONYMOUS

Boom! "What's that?"
"They're practicing for Sunday.
They're dropping bombs to let us know
That Sunday next, ten years ago
The Armistice was signed; and so
The War-survivors home could go;
'Twill ten years be, come Sunday."

Boom! Boom! "What now?"
"'Twill ten years be, come Sunday,
Since folks at home were mad with joy,
For War was ended. Every boy

Whom Gas or Bomb did not destroy
The arts of Peace would soon employ.

. . . . .

They're practicing for Sunday."

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!
"They're practicing for Sunday.
On that day, when this sound we hear,
Each man and maiden far or near,
In memory of yesteryear,
Will silent stand for prayer and tear.
'Twill ten years be, come Sunday."

Boom! Boom! "Why bombs?"
" 'Twill ten years be, come Sunday.
And should the air from bombs be free,
We might forget to pray. And He,—
God—might unprepared be
To bless our holy Victory.
They're practicing for Sunday."

Boom! "Once more!

They're practicing for Sunday.
'In still small voice,' 'tis writ with care,
The Lord God spake. Now everywhere
War's implement with noise and flare
Bids us that God to find,—in prayer!
'Twill ten years be, come Sunday."

'Twill ten years be, come Sunday—
They're practicing for Sunday,
Boom!
Boom! Boom!
Armistice Day next Sunday!
Thirty seconds—bow your head!
Don't forget the soldier-dead!
Boom!
Boom! Boom!
" 'Tis the Star-Spangled,"—(See—
They're practicing for Sunday.)
"O'er the Land of the Free."
Boom!
Boom!
Ten Years—Come Sunday!

THERMOPYLÆ

ROBERT HILLYER

Men lied to them and so they went to die.
Some fell, unknowing that they were deceived,
And some escaped, and bitterly bereaved
Beheld the truth they loved shrink to a lie.
And those there were that never had believed,
But from afar had read the gathering sky,
And darkly wrapt in that dread prophecy
Died trusting that their truth might be retrieved.

It matters not. For life deals thus with Man;
To die alone deceived or with the mass,
Or disillusioned to complete his span.
Thermopylæ or Golgotha, all one—
The young dead legions in the narrow pass;
The stark black cross against the setting sun.

ARMISTICE DAY, 1928

ERNEST HARTSOCK

Come, let us wave a flag and jump and yell:
A student army swaggers down the street.
(*O in the bowels of abysmal hell*
The silent thunder of ten thousand feet!)

Come, let the martial snarls of gloating bands
Inflame our patriotic wrath and glee!
(*O in the languid mire of ruined lands*
The aching echo of dead minstrelsy!)

Come, let the dragons of the sky compete,
And guttural-bellowing dreadnoughts mimic battle.
(*O on the tides of blood the phantom fleet,*
And in the air Death's quiet iron rattle!)

Come, senator and silken profiteer,
To scream the victory of those who died.
(*O in the dark like trumpets, deep and clear*
The terrible cry of brothers, crucified!)

TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED

On Viewing War Graves at Verdun, 1928

D. Maitland Bushby

Ten years; but what are years to the dead
Who lie beneath conquested soil,
At rest, at peace, from bloody toil?

Ten years since these have followed and led
The charge of steel against a foe
Who met and gave them blow for blow.

Ten years have thousands slept in a bed
Of priceless earth that once was France,
But now a world's inheritance.

Ten years; but what are years to these dead?
For them no love, no sun, no stars;
But glory and bemedaled scars!

PICKING SKULLS AT VERDUN

Vincent G. Burns

A respectable, exceedingly proper paper reports
With hands in the air and squeamish face and "Horrors!"
That folk on the fields of Verdun
Are raking the earth for skulls ten years decayed
To take them home for souvenirs!

A tragedy! says the good editor,
That people should be so cruel, so callous,
As to dig up out of clay the erstwhile heads
Of perished soldier-boys,
Heads that have been offered upon the holy altar of war
And ought to be left in peace!

Well, skulls are as thick as daisies
Over that little hill in France
Where a million men were slain,
Dead Man's Hill they call it,
Where for four years
Murders were made by the wholesale!

And then the thick-skulled newspaper man
Lets out his raucous squawk at this late date
To protect impersonal skulls
That cannot know nor feel forevermore!
He who helped to put these dead boys there,
Who with his jingo cries for war
And his blind glorification of national might
Paved way for the havoc of the battle!
Now he is chagrined to think
That a few skulls have been brought to light,
Better to let them rest beneath the all-forgiving earth
Than resurrect old sins, old shames, old horrors!

Ah! what pitiful irony!
The guns that made skulls of tousled heads,
The gas that brought to happy hearts decay,
The maelstrom that made mincemeat of a continent,
These are the blunders of these blind old men
Who always see the folly *when it is too late!*

TEN YEARS AFTER

Lucia Trent and Ralph Cheyney

Reverberating boom of shuffling, stamping feet!
Now living ribbons roll their way down every major street
While snarling music rips the air. The town's a beating drum
Commanding men to war. With hearts aflame they come!

The devil feasts the men of wealth in every pious land—
The name of God on every tongue, His blood on every hand.
An armistice is heralded. Four million corpses rot.
The whole world staggers ponderously, the world itself was shot.

Death alone was victor, dust was all we won.
Self-determination? Ask the southern sun
What of Nicaraguans bleeding for their land.
What of our own veterans, begging, hat in hand?

Democratic safety? What of crimson Rome?
What of dark suppression in our very home?
Murder mows as red a swath, call it "war" or not.
The whole world staggers ponderously, the world itself was shot.

The old world staggers, but a young, triumphant world is born.
Before the Tower of Babel, sound a clear, resurgent horn
And prophesy the jubilant dawn when a true peace will come!
Make the will of the world your trumpet, the heart of the world
your drum!

ARMISTICE DAY

EDMUND VANCE COOKE

Armistice Day! when a new sun rose
And the hate and the horror reached a close. . . .

But here is the slave of a crawling crutch,
Maimed by the shrapnel's devilish whim,
And trinkets and tributes don't mean much
To a man torn limb from limb.

Armistice Day! and a peace proclaimed,
But how is it peace for the halt and maimed?

Armistice Day! when the curtain dropped
On the tragic field and the fight was stopped. . . .

But there are no fields nor hills nor skies
For one whom the noon-day lends no light,
For the horror of war ate out his eyes
And his day is endless night!

Armistice Day! with the war behind,
But how is it ended for one made blind?

Armistice Day! and the joy-bells ring
And the children of earth leap up and sing. . . .

But one who is here is yet away
And a maggot is at his festered brain.
He whimpers and whines at his painful play
And he giggles at sores and pain.

Armistice Day! and the world is glad,
But how is it happy for one made mad?

Armistice Day! and the wild world cheers
And laughs and forgets its foolish fears. . . .

But the wooden crosses stand in hordes
And stretch white arms in endless prayer,
For they who have paid for the broken swords
Hold eternal armistice there.

Armistice Day! with its petty pride!
And the wars are ended—*for those who died!*

ON READING THE WAR DIARY OF A DEFUNCT AMBASSADOR

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

So that's your Diary—that's your private mind
Translated into shirt-sleeved History. That
Is what diplomacy has left behind
For after-ages to peruse, and find
What passed beneath your elegant silk-hat.

You were a fine old gentleman; compact
Of shrewdness, charm, refinement, and finesse.
Impeccable in breeding, taste, and dress.
No diplomatic quality you lacked—
No tittle of ambassadorial tact.

I can imagine you among "the guns,"
Urbanely peppering partridge, grouse, or pheasant—
Guest of those infinitely privileged ones
Whose lives are padded, petrified, and pleasant.
I visualize you feeding off gold-plate
And gossiping on grave affairs of State.

Now you're defunct; your gossip's gravely printed;
The world discovers where you lunched and dined
On such and such a day, and what was hinted
By ministers and generals far behind
The all-important conflict, carnage-tinted.

The world can read the rumors that you gleaned
From various Fronts; the well-known Names you met;
Each conference you attended and convened;
And (at appropriate moments) what you ate.
Thus (if the world's acute) it can derive
Your self, exact, uncensored, and alive.

The world will find no pity in your pages;
No exercise of spirit worthy of mention;
Only a public-funeral grief-convention;
And all the circumspection of the ages.
But I, for one, am grateful, overjoyed,
And unindignant that your punctual pen
Should have been so constructively employed
In manifesting to unprivileged men
The visionless officialized fatuity
That once kept Europe safe for Perpetuity.

ARMISTICE, 1928

KENNETH GROESBECK

There are not even mounds, any more, where they lie,
The men who warred to wipe out war, under a stricken sky;
Nor is there any remembrance, or mark that I can see
In my heart, or your heart, as great as their victory.

If in our folly we shall fail to take the gift they gave us—
If in our blindness we shall breach the wall they built to save us—
Theirs no less is the victory, who sleep in honor sweet,
And ours the retribution, deserved of our defeat.

SOLILOQUY

November 11, 1928

N. R. A. BECKER [1]

Ten years! Can that be all
Since Peace returned to spread her tattered wings
Above a soul-sick world?
Since armies ceased their vast maneuverings
And battle flags were furled?

Ten years! Can that be all
Since that transplanted hell of northern France
Drew tranquil breath again?
Since nations signed their pledge of continence
Quitting sword for mightier pen?

[1] The writer of this poem is a tubercular patient in the U. S. Veterans Bureau Hospital, Tucson, Arizona. He edits the paper The Southwest Veteran, where the poem appears. It gives, says the Catholic chaplain, Victor R. Stoner, "such an excellent idea of the loneliness and patience and determination of these sick men in my hospital."

Ten million men threw down their arms that day!
Ten times ten million sought their knees to pray:
"O God above, defend this peace
"And of Thy mercy send
"That man shall not again release
"His hate till time shall end!"

Ten years! And on this day of days I see,
Behind white walls, wan faces—haggard, drawn—
And shattered bodies; eyes that seek the dawn
Of some longed-for to-morrow that shall free
Them from the scourge that war has laid
Upon their lives. For us, and for this peace
We hymn, they gave their all, and time shall cease
Before our debt to them can be repaid!

Ten years!
I hear one cry:
"How time slips by!"
But what can that one know
Of how time drags—how slow
The days, the weeks, the months, the years
Within those walls—how, till he hears
That pensive, plaintless call:
"Ten years? Can that be all?"

TEN YEARS AFTER

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

In Flanders and in France the poppies bloom
Blood-bright; and from the crimson pits where hell
Roared his red laughter golden bees resume
Their dark industrial bass; and like a bell
Of silver flame the lark shakes heaven down;
Wheels turn; the harvests burst the bins apart;
The dead men have their sleep and their renown;
And peace broods with her hand upon her heart.

We strap wings to our shoulders, plot the poles,
Lift living voices from the air, explore,
Build, break, rebuild, drive bargains, sell our souls,
Call in our loans and calculate the war. . . .
Ten years ago we gave the heart's red stuff;
Ten years ago we could not give enough.

LOVE, GIVE ME THE FEEL OF TOMORROW!

RALPH CHEYNEY

Come, love, help me move all the mirrors out of my workshop,
All the sore spots out of my heart!
You only can give me what I need:
A steel girder faith to build on,
The feel of tomorrow in my land.
Andante of a happy city's hundred thousand feet,
Keeping step in a grand procession,
Telling the world they walk in peace and freedom,
Broadcasting a forever-and-ever armistice day.

XII

PEACE

HOW WILL IT SEEM?

Charles Hanson Towne

How will it seem when Peace comes back once more,
After these desperate days of shattering pain?
How will it be with all of us again,
When hushed forever is the thunder of War?
There still are primroses by many a shore;
And still there bloom, in many a lovely lane,
Hawthorn and lilacs; and the roses' stain
Is red against full many a garden door.
O days to be! O honeyed nights of sleep,
When the white moon shall mount the quiet sky!
Shall we be wholly happy when buds creep,
Remembering those who dared to bleed and die?
Can we be glad again? Nay, we shall weep
For those who told this sad, glad world goodbye.

WHEN THE WAR'S AT AN END

Eric P. Dawson

At length when the war's at an end
  And we're just ourselves,—you and I,
And we gather our lives up to mend,
  We, who've learned how to live and to die:

Shall we think of the old ambition
  For riches, or how to grow wise,
When, like Lazarus freshly arisen,
  We've the presence of Death in our eyes?

Shall we dream of our old life's passion,—
  To toil for our heart's desire,
Whose souls War has taken to fashion
  With molten death and with fire?

I think we shall crave the laughter
  Of the wind through trees gold with the sun,
When our strife is all finished,—after
  The carnage of War is done.

Just these things will then seem worth while:—
  How to make Life more wondrously sweet,
How to live with a song and a smile,
  How to lay our lives at Love's feet.

RECOVERY

Rose Macaulay

When this so bitter tide
  Shall turn and ebb to the waste whence it came,
The world, like a wrecked ship shorn of her pride,
A battered ship, tipped on a riddled side,
A shattered ship, shall ride
  From storm to port, bankrupt of all but shame.

In that dark dawn all we
As lost mariners shall reel crazily
On a new earth, grown stranger than the sea.
  As drowned men shall we come,
  All pale, all sick, all dumb,
  (But some, oh, some
Shall come not even thus, so dumb they be.)

We'll have no words to string, no tales to tell
Of the unutterable
Black dreams dreamt in the drifting deeps of hell.
  But little things of earth
  Shall stab us through with mirth—
Street lamps, each like a new-sprung celandine,
White daisies and red wine,
And small wise stars that shiver and blink and shine.

So, bankrupt of hope and blind
To faith and love, we'll find,
We, even we, joy in things small and kind.
Though it lie drowned, the world we dreamt we knew,
  —Oh, though no dream be true—
We shall cry and laugh, as sailors and children do.

BREST LEFT BEHIND

JOHN FARRAR

The sun strikes gold the dirty street,
The band blares, the drums insist
And brown legs twinkle and muscles twist—
Pound! Pound! The rhythmic feet.
The laughing street-boys shout,
And a couple of hags come out
To grin and bob and clap.
Stiff rusty black their dresses,
And crispy white the Breton cap,
Prim on white, smooth tresses.

Wait! . . . Wait! . . . While dun clouds droop
Over the sunlit docks,
Over the wet gray rocks
And mast of steamer and sloop,
And the old squat towers,
Damp gray and mossy brown,
Where lovely Ann looked down
And dreamed rich dreams through long luxurious hours.

Sudden and swift, it rains!
Familiar, fogging, gray;
It blots the sky away
And cuts the face with biting little pains.
We grunt and poke shoes free of muddy cakes,
Watching them messing out
Upon the dock in thick brown lakes—
"No more French mud!" the sergeant cries,
And someone swears, and someone sighs,
And the neat squads swing about.

Silent the looming hulk above—
No camouflage this time—
She's white and tan and black!
Hurry, bend, climb,
Push forward, stagger back!

How clean the wide deck seems,
The bunks, how trim!
And oh, the musty smell of ships!
Faces are set and grim,

Thinking of months, this hope was pain;
And eyes are full of dreams,
And gay little tunes come springing to the lips—
Home, home again, again!

She's moving now,
Across the prow
The dusk-soft harbor bursts
Into a shivering bloom of light
From warehouse, transport, tramp,
And countless little bobbing masts
Each flouts the night
With eager boastful lamp—
Bright now, now dimmer, dimmer,
Fewer and fewer glimmer.
Only the lights that mark the passing shore,
Loftly and lonely star and gray—
Then are no more.

We are alone with dusk and creamy spray.

The captain coughs, remembering the rain.
The major coughs, remembering the mud.
Some shudder at the horror of dark blood,
Or wine-wet kisses, lewd.
Some sigh, remembering new loves and farewell pain.
Some smile, remembering old loves to be renewed.
Silent, we stare across the deepening night.
France vanishing! Swift, swift, the curling waves—
Fights and despair,
And faces, fair;
Proud heads held high
For Victory;
And flags above friends' graves.

The group buzzes, rustles, hums,
Then stiffens as the colonel comes,
A burly figure in the mellow light,
With haughty kingly ways.
He does not scan the night,
Nor hissing spray that flies,
But his cold old glance plays
Along the level of our eyes.

"I don't see very many tears," he says.

SPLENDIDLY DEAD[1]

After Reading "For Poets Slain in War"

MARION DOYLE

"Splendidly dead," who dares such maudlin singing!
Seeger, Kilmer, Pearse, Brooke and Péguy—
Men who would today be gladly bringing
Daring gifts of song to tired humanity,
Sacrificed to Power's lust for power,
Masked beneath the lie: "For Home and Honor."
"Splendidly dead"—the pride of manhood's flower
Crucified upon the cross of horror?

Face the truth; what need *now* to dissemble?
Mars and Kings have silenced all their singing;
They are dust and yet we start and tremble
At the white dove's perilous slow winging. . . .

Never I hear of their "splendid dying"
But I hear the voice of lost song crying.

LAMENT

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

We who are left, how shall we look again
Happily on the sun or feel the rain
Without remembering how they who went
Ungrudgingly and spent
Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and the rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings—
But we, how shall we turn to little things
And listen to the birds and winds and streams
Made holy by their dreams,
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?

[1] "For Poets Slain in War" appeared in Ainslee's Magazine in 1919. It is by Walter A. Roberts, and contained lines like these:

"Lo, they were darlings of destiny! Weakly we shed
Even one tear that they lie at the barricades red,
Splendidly dead for the Patria, splendidly dead!"

PEACE SHALL LIVE

MAX EHRMANN

The guns are still, the dead sleep on,
The blind and crippled walk the streets,
Bereaved hearts bright colors don,
Again the pulse of factories beats;
Nightmares and grimy days have fled,
Forgotten are the dead.

Around the world from every land
The prayers and pleadings never cease—
For swords and men? Nay, heart and hand
To build the dream eternal peace.
Disdainfully we speak reproof;
Proudly we stand aloof.

Was it indifference that sent
Our sons the tides of war to stem?
Through flaming fields and blood they went.
Shall we not keep our faith with them
Whose bodies lie on foreign leas
Or toss in many seas?

The keen, cold sword the flesh will feel,
If once again the world shall quake
And men back to the jungle steal.
O Countrymen, the hour to stake
Our all is here, lest grim alarms
Again shriek out, "To arms!"

A question burns within man's breast:
In bloody wars shall man expire—
Or by the arts of peace be blessed
That lift his soul forever higher?
My Countrymen, stand forth and give
Your answer, "Peace shall live!"

WORLD-WINTER

LAURA BELL EVERETT

Wandering on yestereen
Through the woods in autumn flush,
I saw gold that had been green,
Stood before the Burning Bush.
Lost
In frost
Of a single night
Is my altar's garnishing;
Yet I know
Through storm and snow
Comes the spring.

Years joined years when nations met
With no battle-flags unfurled,
When, despite distrust and fret,
War seemed banished from the world;
Then
For men
A single day—
Goodwill lost—
Brought holocaust.
When shall this world-winter cease?
When bloom the May
Of lasting peace?

TO KEEP THE PEACE

D. G. BICKERS

Rejoicing, celebrant and wild with joy we were—
And it was well! There was enough to stir the heart
Of all the nation unto shouts of praise—to hear
The word we longed for, news of peace; to know the part
Our country took in all that went to bring the end to pass!
To know that peace may be the portion of the world when all
The remnant rubbish of the wreck of war is cleared, to mass
The heaping blessings of the years to come, when calls shall fall
Upon the earth—it is enough to thrill the soul with joy!
But Peace her problems and responsibilities will bring—

The battles were but clearing of the way! Now to employ
The victory that peace shall mean what 'twas designed, to fling
About the nations such security that, knowing, trusting, each
Shall keep the other's safety as a sacred thing; that task
Is for the world today: To build so deep and broad that any breach
Of peace shall be impossible. For vision in this work we ask!

LET US HAVE PEACE

NANCY BYRD TURNER

The earth is weary of our foolish wars.
Her hills and shores were shaped for lovely things,
Yet all our years are spent in bickerings
Beneath the astonished stars.

April by April laden with beauty comes,
Autumn by autumn turns our toil to gain,
But hand at sword-hilt, still we start and strain
To catch the beat of drums.

Knowledge to knowledge adding, skill to skill,
We strive for others' good as for our own—
And then, like cavemen snarling with a bone,
We turn and rend and kill. . . .

With life so fair, and all too short a lease
Upon our special star! Nay, love and trust,
Not blood and thunder shall redeem our dust.
Let us have peace!

PEACE ON EARTH

ROBERT FREEMAN

The men of the earth said: "We must war
As the men of the earth have warred;
'Tis ours to wield on the battlefield
The unrelenting sword."
But they who had seen the valiant die,
The fathers of men, they answered, "Why?"

The men of the earth said: "We must arm,
For so we would reveal
The nobler part of the human heart,
The love of the nation's weal."
But they who had sung their lullaby,
The mothers of men, they answered, "Why?"

Then men of the earth said: "We must fight,
For so the fit survive;
By the jungle law of fang and claw
The strong are kept alive."
But a crippled, cankered progeny,
The sons of the culls, they answered, "Why?"

The men of the earth said: "We must fall,
And falling build the road
O'er which the race with quickening pace
Can find its way to God."
But down from a Cross uplifted high,
The Saviour of men, He answered, "Why?"

THE WINDS OF GOD

CLINTON SCOLLARD

Across the azure spaces,
Athwart the vasts of sky,
With winnowings of mighty wings
The winds of God go by.

Above the meres and mountains,
With unseen sandals shod,
Above the plains, with choric strains,
Sweep by the winds of God.

"Peace—in His name!" they murmur;
"Peace—in His name!" they cry.
Oh, men, give ear! Do you not hear
The winds of God go by?

TO PEACE

W. W. M.

We are the Dead.
Give ear, O Peace!
A thousand thousand empty hearths
And wives un-husbanded
And children fatherless, cry out to thee:
Be it not said
Thou hast forgotten why these tears are shed:
Have we not borne a share
Of the intolerable burden and despair?

II

We are the maimed:
Take heed, O Peace!
We laid upon thine altar stone
A gift that burned and flamed
To Heaven's high door: but darkness and despair
Hedge us about.
And pain has come, and weariness, and doubt:
Come thou to our release—
Surely thou bringest healing in thy wings,
O Peace!

III

The women, we,
Hearken, O Peace!
What treasure, with far-looking eyes,
Did we not yield for thee:
Did we not trust thee wholly? and ourselves
We put away
Through every counted hour of every day:
Share thou our bosoms' pain.
Share thou our sacrifice; be partner in our gain.

IV

And we, unborn,
O Peace, O Peace!
Immortal silence fences round
Beyond all bond or bound.
The little hands, outstretched, that never clasp;

The little feet
That run but may not reach to love and greet:
Canst thou, O Peace, hereafter
Make green thy fields for us, and bring us tears and laughter?

"THIS IS THE LAST"

GILBERT WATERHOUSE

Coming in splendor thro' the golden gate
Of all the days, swift passing, one by one,
O silent planet, thou hast gazed upon
How many harvestings dispassionate?
Across the many-furrowed fields of Fate,
Wrapt in the mantle of oblivion,
The old, gray, wrinkled Husbandman has gone;
The blare of trumpets, rattle of the drum,
Disturb him not at all—he sees,
Between the hedges of the centuries,
A thousand phantom armies go and come,
While reason whispers as each marches past,
"This is the last of wars—this is the last!"

A SONG OF VICTORY[1]

EDWIN MARKHAM

But now above the thunder of the drums—
Where, brightening on, the face of Victory comes—
Hark to a mighty sound,
A cry out of the ground:
"Let there be no more battles: field and flood
Are weary of battle blood.
Even the patient stones
Are weary of shrieking shells and dying groans.
Lay the sad swords asleep:
They have their fearful memories to keep.
And fold the flags: they weary of battle days,
Weary of wild flights up the windy ways.
Quiet the restless flags,
Grown strangely old upon the smoking crags.

[1] Abridged.

Look where they startle and leap—
Look where they hollow and heap—
Now greatening into glory and now thinned,
Living and dying momently on the wind.
And bugles that have cried on sea and land
The silver blazon of their high command—
Bugles that held long parley with the sky—
Bugles that shattered the nights on battle walls,
Lay them to rest in dim memorial halls;
For they are weary of that curdling cry
That tells men how to die.
And cannons worn out with their work of hell—
The brief abrupt persuasion of the shell—
Let the shrewd spider lock them one by one,
With filmy cables glancing in the sun;
And let the blue-bird in their iron throats
Build his safe nest and spill his rippling notes.

"Let there be no more battles, men of earth:
The new age rises singing into birth!"

THE WORD OF THE WIND

Louise Driscoll

Wind that carries the sound of bells
Far out over the sea,
Why do you bring the word of tears
With the word of victory?

Alas for the little gray houses
And slender poplar trees!
And women who seek what is not found
By any victories!

Wind that speaks to the wings of birds
And knows how they find their way,
Where did you find your sorrow,
Who should be glad to-day?

In the eyes of little children,
And in the eyes of men
Who have looked upon such things
As must not come again.

Wind that travels the four great roads
And searches the hearts of men,
Now that the war is over shall
We not be glad again?

But still there is sound of weeping,
And women with frightened eyes
Are asking many a question
Where there are no replies.

Wind that has spoken to all the flags
And carried the souls of the dead,
Take our pledge to the Freemen,
They shall be comforted!

Over the flags and the tumult,
This is the one glad voice,
When Freemen speak to Freemen,
Then may the world rejoice!

Then shall the weary captives
Lift up their heads and cheer,
The women's tears shall be wiped away,
And children unlearn fear.

This is the cry of Nations
As broken chains release,
One red word for Freedom,
And one white word for Peace!

MEMORIAL DAY, POST-WAR

MARGUERITE MOOERS MARSHALL

For golden lads, a-faring
  In ghostly, grey review
Past hearts still quick for caring—
  Can old grief hurt like new?—

For him Fate made war's feeder,
(Of peace the lover, the pleader),
Wilson, the world's lost leader—
A wreath, today, of rue!

All the bright hopes men died for,
What living men pursue?—
The brave new world they tried for,
World that was heroes' due!
Not *one* war's brief abating
They sought—but end of hating! . . .
For promises, turned prating,
A song, today, of rue!

For patriotism tarnished
In post-war years—so few!—
For reputations varnished—
Yet black dirt showing through;
For loot and lies and scheming,
And cynic laughter gleaming,
For the death of all great dreaming—
A memory—of rue!

MEMORIAL DAY

William E. Brooks

I heard a cry in the night from a far-flung host,
From a host that sleeps through the years the last long sleep,
By the Meuse, by the Marne, in the Argonne's shattered wood,
In a thousand rose-thronged churchyards through our land.
Sleeps! Do they sleep? I know I heard their cry,
Shrilling along the night like a trumpet blast:

"We died," they cried, "for a dream. Have ye forgot?
We dreamed of a world reborn whence wars had fled,
Where swords were broken in pieces and guns were rust,
Where the poor man dwelt in quiet, the rich in peace,
And children played in the streets, joyous and free.
We thought we could sleep content in a task well done;
But the rumble of guns rolls over us, iron upon iron
Sounds from the forge where are fashioned guns anew;

New fleets spring up in new seas, and under the wave
Stealthy new terrors swarm, with emboweled death.
Fresh cries of hate ring out loud from the demagogue's throat,
While greed reaches out afresh to grasp new lands.
Have we died in vain, in vain? Is our dream denied?
You men who live on the earth we bought with our woe,
Will ye stand idly by while they shape new wars,
Or will ye rise, who are strong, to fulfil our dream,
To silence the demagogue's voice, to crush the fools
Who play with blood-stained toys that crowd new graves?
We call, we call in the night, will ye hear and heed?"
In the name of our dead will we hear? Will we grant them sleep?

BUGLE SONG OF PEACE

A Prophecy for Memorial Day

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

Blow, bugle, blow!
The day has dawned at last.
Blow, blow, blow!
The fearful night is past;
  The prophets realize their dreams.
  Lo! in the east the glory gleams.
Blow, bugle, blow!
The day has dawned at last.

Blow, bugle, blow!
The soul of man is free.
The rod and sword of king and lord
Shall no more honored be;
  For God alone shall govern men,
  And Love shall come to earth again.
Blow, bugle, blow!
The soul of man is free.

Blow, bugle, blow!
Though rivers run with blood,
All greed and strife, and lust for life,
Are passing with the flood.
  The gory beast of war is cowed;
  The world's great heart with grief is bowed.
Blow, bugle, blow!
The day has dawned at last.

THE NEW VICTORY

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Victory comes:
Not hard and laughing as she came of yore,
Her scarlet arms heaped high with spoils of war;
Her slaves, to beating drums,
Low-bent and bearing gifts. . . .
The black cloud lifts,
And, lifting our long-weary eyes to see,
There dawns upon our sight,
Majestic, crowned with light,
Stern and so quiet—she must keep her strength
To build at weary length,
Over again, our scarred and shattered world—
This, then, ah, this is she,
Our graver Victory.

She follows down the furrows
War turned across the world,
Where still the spent shell burrows,
Where the black shot was hurled,
And sows the wheat and corn.
The world, from anguish born
Again from its old grief,
Looks up, athirst
And hungering,
Daring to dream again
Of flowers unhurt, and unstained rain
And love and spring:

Knowing that she shall build each place accurst
Into a thing that may some day again
Be our once land of comfort and delight,
Of ease and mockery. . . .
Even forgetfulness:
Even the gift to bless.

Victory paces slowly through the lands:
No lash is in her hands,
She builds herself no triumph-arch for cover,
No common marble toy—
She is too great for joy.
She who upbuilds

Each little shattered home
And brings men back to it: and lover gives to lover,
And to the shattered soul its faith again,
And to the world continuance of God—
How should our praise for her
In high crowned buildings stand—oh, how be pent
In built or written thing?
The stable world itself is her great monument!

SEW THE FLAGS TOGETHER

VACHEL LINDSAY

Great wave of youth, ere you be spent
Sweep over every monument
Of caste, smash every high imperial wall
That stands against the new World State,
And overwhelm each ravening hate,
And heal and make blood-brothers of us all.
Nor let your clamor cease
Till ballots conquer guns.
Drum on for the world's peace
Till the Tory power is gone.
Envenomed lame old age
Is not our heritage,
But Springtime's vast release, and flaming dawn.

Peasants, rise in splendor
And your accounting render,
Ere the lords unnerve your hand!
Sew the flags together.
Do not tear them down.
Hurl the worlds together.
Dethrone the wallowing monster
And the clown.
Resolving only that shall grow
In Balkan furrow, Chinese row,
That blooms, and is perpetually young,
That only be held fine and dear
That brings heart-wisdom year by year
And puts this thrilling word upon the tongue:
"The United States of Europe, Asia and the World."

"Youth will be served," now let us cry.
Hurl the referendum.
Your fathers, five long years ago,
Resolved to strike, too late.
Now
Sun-crowned crowds
Innumerable
Of boys and girls
Imperial,
With your patchwork flag of brotherhood
On high,
With every silk
In one flower-banner whirled,—
Rise,
Citizens of one tremendous state,
The United States of Europe, Asia and the World.

The dawn is rose-dressed and impearled.
The guards of privilege are spent.
The blood-fed captains nod.
So Saxon, Slav, French, German,
Rise,
Yankee, Chinese, Japanese,
All the lands, all the seas,
With blazing rainbow flag unfurled,
Rise,
Rise,
Take the sick dragons by surprise,
Highly establish,
In the name of God,
The United States of Europe, Asia and the World.

THE FLAG OF PEACE

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

Men long have fought for their flying flags,
They have died those flags to save;
Their long staves rest on the shattered breast,
They are planted deep in the grave.
Now the world's new flag is streaming wide,
Far-flying wide and high.
It shall cover the earth from side to side
As the rainbow rings the sky.

The flag of the day when men shall stand
For service, not for fight;
When every race, in every land,
Shall join for the world's delight;
When all our flags shall blend in one,
And all our wars shall cease,
'Neath the new flag, the true flag,
The rainbow flag of peace.

On a field of white that bow above
Shall arch the world across,
And all the colors that we love
Glow there without a loss.
Orange and green in union new,
Proud gold and violet fair,
With world-beloved red, white and blue
Shall shine together there.

Green from the earth that holds us one,
All blue of sky and sea,
And the golden hue of that great sun
In whose light our life must be.
Red for the blood of brotherhood,
White for the soul's release,—
The new flag! The true flag!
The rainbow flag of peace!

HATE

Hala Jean Hammond

Peace . . . will you buy it with blood and tears?
With women despoiled, with children's dark fears?
Crushed under the wheels, men . . . give in vain;
Death-masked are their faces, bled white of all pain . . .
But deep in the earth-holes hearing always the rain . . .
Of shrapnel.

Conquering . . . conquered! Bend the knee
To bayonet-blazoned apostasy,
Seeding in souls; strange plants to grow
Out of its loins; and who to know
Whither the wind its pollen shall blow
At midnight?

The heavens are brass to cannons' boom;
And rent the earth with a hell-simoon
Led hard by Death. . . . Let us go away. . . .
No, not to preach, nor even to pray;
But with murderous blade to smite, to slay,
Black hatred.

1914—AND AFTER

James Oppenheim

Would you end war?
Create great Peace. . . .

The Peace that demands all of a man,
His love, his life, his veriest self;
Plunge him into the smelting fires of a work that becomes his child,

Give him a hard Peace; a Peace of discipline and justice. . . .
Kindle him with vision, invite him to joy and adventure;
Set him to work, not to create *things*
But to create *man;*
Yea, himself.

Go, search your heart, America . . .
Turn from the machine to man,
Build, while there is yet time, a creative Peace. . . .

While there is yet time! . . .
For if you reject great Peace,
As surely as vile living brings disease,
So surely will your selfishness bring war.

PEACE: 1919

M. C. Sinclair

The jonquils bloom again upon the hill
And call me through the window-pane, "Come out!
Rest you! The Beast of war has fled in rout,
And there is sunshine on the valley still.

Long you had thought the sun itself was dead,
Or quenched in human blood and could not shine.
But Peace has come! The yellow jasmine vine
Is blooming, too, and noon is overhead!"

But they will never rest, the frenzied men!
The worlds are toppling here, and crashing there,
And calls to arms, to arms, resound again!
The maddened peoples grapple everywhere,
To snatch what they have dreamed, or lost, or won—
And tears are gathering to drown the Sun.

VICTORY WITHOUT PEACE

CLEMENT WOOD

The slaughter-bugles screamed once more,
Over the patchwork lands of men,
And scattered, sword-hewn empires tore
Each other's greedy hearts again—

One with a black and boastful greed,
Seeking a red supremacy;
The other with a mumbled creed
That it was armed to make men free.

Each steppe and pampa woke to flame
And joined the berserker advance;
From wild forgotten roads they came,
For the world's roads all led to France.

And now no more the hail of steel
Tortures the lines of brown and gray. . . .
The brief, joy-mad processions reel
And drop . . . and it is peace, men say.

Peace? When wherever men are found
The victors cry, "But just so free!"
And reddened banners spring from the ground
For freer red supremacy. . . .

A hollow shell of victory,
With war still writhing at its heart;
A clipped and gelded liberty,
Striving to force its chains apart!

Yet solvent love is not too far,
If men grow wise, or mobs stay kind;
And we could calm this troubled star,
Its singing rapture unconfined.

Now take your choice, O you who hoard
Frail-fingered power, weak lordly breath:
Young freedom, or the age-scarred sword,
Which leaves no peace on earth—but death.

THE WINGLESS VICTORY

HERVEY ALLEN

Niké of Samothrace,
Thy godlike wings
Cleft windy space
Above the ships of kings.
Fain of thy lips,
By hope made glorious,
Time kissed thy grand, Greek face
Away from us.

Our Niké has no wings;
She has not known
Clean heights, and from her lips
Comes starvèd moan.
Mints lie that coin her grace,
And Time will hate her face,
For it has turned the world's hope
Into stone.

HOW LONG?

FERNER R. NUHN

How long this vain, blind lust of power
  Rough-hid in specious suavity
Like Freudian complex, waxing sour,
Running amuck in evil hour
When peaceful peasants from each bower
Are drenched in propaganda shower
  And dragged to die "vicariously"?

How long will history call men great
Whose highest claim to such renown
Was that they taught men how to hate
And kill their fellows—for the state?
Napoleon,—or Pasteur, crown?
Bismarck or Goethe, which goes down
As one whom all should emulate?

How long this "country right or wrong";
This mouth-allegiance to a flag;
This madly patriotic throng
Who cry out "Treason!" when men long
To see a world with lines of hate
Erased, and hymns of common love
Replace their country's battle song?

CRY OF THE PEOPLE

J. G. Neihardt

Tremble before your chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things,
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings,
Guided by seers and sages,
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chain of ages
Out of the night we come.

Lend us no ear that pities,
Offer no almoner's hand,
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth,
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers, makers,
We are no longer dumb,
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers,
Sweeping the earth—we come!
Ranked in the worldwide dawn
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

GOTTERDAMMERUNG

ERNEST HARTSOCK

A god is dying, O bewildered ones,
A greybeard god, whose zealous warriors
Have cowed the dismal world with bellowing guns
Until the sky like some vast conch-shell roars.
A god is perishing from glut of praise
From hypocrites whose tawny talons gleam
With secret gold which Judas-bright betrays
Sad barter of their high birthright of dream.

Let trumpets burn with turbulence of morn!
While Jericho cracks down its house of glass.
A god is dying and a man is born:
Let Mars and all his mangled mourners pass.
Here raise the sepulcher of creeds and kings
Where peace, the Phoenix, lifts his golden wings!

PEACE

EDWIN MARKHAM

O brother, lift a cry, a long world-cry
  Sounding from sky to sky—
The cry of one great word,
  Peace, peace, the world-will clamoring to be heard—
A cry to break the ancient battle-ban,
To end it in the sacred name of Man!

TO ANYONE

WITTER BYNNER

Whether the time be slow or fast,
  Enemies, hand in hand,
Must come together at the last
  And understand.

No matter how the die be cast
  Nor who may seem to win,
You know that you must love at last—
  Why not begin?

XIII

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER
AND
POEMS TO WOODROW WILSON

THE UNKNOWN

HARRY KEMP

Here, under sacred ground,
The Unknown lies:
Dumb be the earth around
And dumb the skies
Before His laureled Fame—
Yea, let sublime
Silence conduct His Name
Unspelled, till Time,
Bowed with eternity,
Goes back to God,
Abandoning earth to be
At life's last exequy
Man's final clod . . .

Here, under sacred ground,
The Unknown lies:
Dim armies gather 'round
His sacrifice;
Kings, Princes, Presidents
Attest His worth:
The Generals bow before
His starry earth;
In the World's heart inscribed
His love, his fame—
He leads the Captains with
His Unknown Name!

NOVEMBER 11TH

FRANK E. CAMPBELL

This day three years ago
The war cannons hushed
Their raucous, blasting cries . . .
This day in Washington
One who fell . . . mid pomp and
Ceremonial lies . . .

On earth 'tis said by folk
Who see not Heaven high
Unknown is this soul's name . . .
But High where angels sing,
They do in voices golden
This great "Unknown" acclaim . . .

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Witter Bynner

. . . . . .

And then I felt a fever in my veins
To be done with all these passions, all these pains.
I envied the Unknown Soldier. Let him lie
Solemn, anonymous. A man must die—
What difference whether mighty with no name
Or with a dated lettering of a puny fame?
Death is a simpler matter, anyway,
Than merely living on from day to day,
The blunders and the blaming and the blinking—
No wonder wars occur, instead of thinking!
Must we be fools and, when we organize,
Grow twice as sinister and half as wise?
When we enlist as soldiers of a State
Or race or creed or culture, anything great,
Why will we think as little as we can,
Instead of being friendly, man to man? . . .
The hour the great memorial went by,
I saw a woman clasp a child and cry—
And then a touch of fever caught her breath,
To have her baby die as fine a death.

Are there any fruits to know us by but these?
Was that a whisper in the evening breeze?

VOICE OF THE UNKNOWN DEAD

Herbert Stotesbury

Oh, my people! Do ye wonder
Whom the spades are digging under,
To the gun's saluting thunder
And the bugle's final call!

Was I one of starved affection?
Was I bowed with imperfection?
Oh, until the resurrection
It shall matter not at all!

What I was hath passed behind me
With the dust that God assigned me;
And the grave that once confined me
Hath been opened for a space
That my voice may speak in thunder,
While the spades shall dig me under,
Of the wrath that tears asunder,
Or opposes race to race.

And my words shall prove a treasure
If ye think, in toil and pleasure,
That as ye shall justly measure,
God shall mete to you; nor cease
Till His world be wrapt in wonder,
Where the guns no more shall thunder
And the spades that dig me under
Be the symbols of His peace.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

ARTHUR B. RHINOW

I—They look so solemn and fine. Who are they?

MYSELF—The best known have come to honor the unknown.

I—Why do they honor him?

MYSELF—He represents the millions to whom they are indebted for victory.

I—Do they think so highly of them?

MYSELF—They bow to the majesty of the common man.

I—Then, if another conflict threatens, will they ask the common people, the Unknown, whether they want war?

MYSELF—Look at those beautiful flowers.

I—The boys on the farms and in the mills?

MYSELF—Hush. Listen to the oratory.

I—Will they ask the mothers, the unknown mothers?

MYSELF—Ah, the music.

THE PASSING OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

VILDA SAUVAGE OWENS

They are bearing him home through the old Virginia Valley,
  Home to the hill where a Nation's heroes sleep;
Hushed are the hosts that honor his silent passing.
  Hushed is their grief and deep.
Lower him tenderly; vex not his gentle dreaming;
  Pillow his head on the kindly loam of France.
So shall his sleep be the sweeter, feeling thy nearness,
  Land of the Great Romance!

Souls of the mighty fallen stand at attention,
  Sheridan riding his shadowy steed of fame;
Heroes of Gettysburg, Shiloh and grim Shenandoah,
  Scorched in the battle flame;
A hundred score of lads whose bodies were taken
  Maimed from the fields where the red Rappahannock runs;
Nameless as he, yet honored as he is honored;
  All of them Mothers' Sons!

He is the youth of America, taken untimely;
  Symbol of countless thousands who perished young;
Sinew and bone of a Nation, crusht in the making;
  The poet, his song half sung.
You, who dwell in a Liberty bought by his passing,
  It is your Son, your Brother is buried here.
Pause for a moment, forgetting the day's occupation.
  Offer a prayer—a tear!

UNKNOWN

ARTHUR CHAPMAN

I have come back to my mother's land—
  I was long, too long away.
She shades her eyes with a blue-veined hand
  In the sunlit upland day
And looks at my saddle, my horse, my gun—
  For my haunts were not the strown . . .
My Western mother has murmured, "Son!"
  So why am I called Unknown?

I have come back to my mother's land,
Where the yellow pine glades are;
The cypress flutters, by breezes fanned,
And the rose scent floats afar;
There's a splash of oars on quiet streams,
And a bright hued bird has flown
Like those that colored my youthful dreams
Ere they called me the Great Unknown.

I have come back to my mother's land,
Where the surf's like distant drums,
And the fishing craft makes bright the strand
And a kindly neighbor comes—
For such is the way of the village folk
When a woman is left alone . . .
It's of me they talk when she doffs her cloak,
So why am I called Unknown?

For I belong to them—Mothers All—
From the seas to the plains of sage,
From the hills that rock to the snowslide's fall
To the desert gray-lined with age.
And my tomb shall vibrate with messages
All couched in that mother tone
Which stirs the heart. Ah, then, who says
That I have returned Unknown?

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

MARGARET STINEBACK

His dreams have all grown lovely with the years
The bullet-ache within his breast has flown
As have the horrors; the dried, scarlet smears
Upon a comrade's sleeve, the anguished groan
Of some young prisoner; the rat-a-tat
Of busy, calculating guns; the sound
Of bursting shell, of shouting; and the spat
Of wet French earth when shot ploughed through the ground.

The din has passed away. Now flowers spill
Their quiet petals like a fresh caress.
There is dim relaxation in the thrill
Of cool, rich soil, in the forgetfulness

It fosters. He is like a sleeping boy
Whose brow is damp, with tired brown curls that cling.
He has that same exhaustion, that same joy,
That pure oblivion of everything.

This is the Unknown Soldier. His dear grave
Is hallowed. So we, very grateful, say:
"He signifies the bravest of the brave:
He is above the common run of clay."
Yet, what is bravery—if it must show
Its potency in carnage? Oh, they tread
The truest road of bravery who go
Along the path of Peace—God's path—instead!

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

ANGELA MORGAN

He is known to the sun-white Majesties
Who stand at the gates of dawn;
He is known to the cloud-borne company
Whose souls but late have gone.
Like wind-flung stars through lattice bars,
They throng to greet their own,
With voice of flame they sound his name
Who died to us unknown.

He is hailed by the time-crowned brotherhood,
By the Dauntless of Marathon,
By Raymond, Godfrey and Lion Heart,
Whose dreams he carried on.
His name they call through the heavenly hall,
Unheard by earthly ear.
He is claimed by the famed in Arcady
Who knew no title here.

Oh faint was the lamp of Sirius
And dim was the Milky Way.
Oh far was the floor of Paradise
From the soil where the soldier lay.
Oh chill and stark was the crimson dark
Where huddled men lay deep;
His comrades all denied his call—
Long had they lain asleep.

Oh strange how the lamp of Sirius
Drops low to the dazzled eyes:
Oh strange how the steel-red battlefields
Are floors of Paradise.
Oh strange how the ground with never a sound
Swings open, tier on tier,
And standing there in the shining air
Are the friends he cherished here.

They are known to the sun-shod sentinels
Who circle the morning's door.
They are led by a cloud-bright company
Through paths unseen before.
Like blossoms blown their souls have flown
Past war and reeking sod.
In the book unbound their names are found—
They are known in the courts of God!

THE TOMB OF ETERNAL LIFE

KATHRYN WHITE RYAN

From a port-hole his boy-face gazed back
From a shell hole he fought the attack
He heard cries, he saw flame, he was burned.
. . . In silence . . . returned. . . .

Like breakers of slow seas
Folding their drooping rim
Crowds heave eternal life on him.

IN ARLINGTON

EDNA MEAD

Does he lie gladly in the earth of home
To-night, beneath his weight of fame and flowers?
And is his sleep secure?
Have the proud hearts who left him there to rest
Turned back to living humbly, with a vow
So deep it *must* endure?

He went so honestly to death! Can they
Dare to forget the need of honesty
  And wreck To-morrow with their petty fears,
So that his happy ghost must some day rise
To look with bitterly accusing eyes
  On a vast ruin of the Future's years?

If so, they made but mockery and play
Of honor and its wearer yesterday.

THE LITTLE STONES

Remembering a First Sight of the Arlington National Cemetery

BARBARA YOUNG

I saw them shining in the sun,
The little stones of Arlington;
The endless rows of snowy stones,
As cold as death, as white as bones.

My eyes went counting, and I said:
"Here lies a world of early dead;
A buried world of light and love.
And who shall count the cost thereof?"

I saw strange shapes that seemed to pass
Like ghosts upon the early grass,
Like spectres marching, one by one,
The little stones of Arlington.

I heard a fife; I heard a drum.
I heard a bugle calling "Come!"
A thousand thousand soundless feet
Went tramping down a ghostly street.

A thousand thousand restless heads
Were lifted from their earthy beds;
And blood flowed out; I saw it run
Upon the stones of Arlington.

A thousand thousand tortured eyes
Looked up unto the silent skies;
And to my ears there came a sound
Of voices from the silent ground.

"It is not meet that men should die
With fire and sword," the dead men cry.
"The bitter price is paid in vain.
Peace is not bought with dead men slain."

I heard the words like clanging bells,
I saw the battles and the hells,
The rainy roads, the darkened sun.
I saw the stones of Arlington.

Tomorrow bits of silk will wave
Above the grass on every grave,
And blossoms plucked and borne with love.
And who shall count the cost thereof?

It is enough. Let men no more
Spill blood of men on any shore;
Nor smoke of battle cloud the sun;
And no more stones in Arlington.

ON ARMISTICE DAY

November 11, 1921

Ernest E. Davies

The multitude has watched, with silent prayer,
The Unknown Lad of Arlington borne by;
Sad strains of funeral dirges fill the air,
And muffled drums repeat their mournful cry.

Then suddenly, in spite of time and place,
Applause rings out above the muffled drums,
And all eyes turn, expecting soon to face
Some great one who in martial splendor comes.

. . . . . .

'Tis but a pale, worn scholar stirs their zeal,
Who in his time dared look beyond the sea;
Dared couple with his own great country's weal
The welfare of entire humanity.

Who asked that nations act as men who stand,
Like Pilgrim Fathers, on a lawless shore,
And to a solemn compact set their hand,
Pledged one and all to guard it evermore.

No escort flanks him round on prancing steeds;
There are no ribboned medals on his breast;
No brazen trumpets glorify his deeds,
Nor shall, perhaps, until he is at rest.

Yet mark this well, ye men who wrought him woe:
His deeds will live when you and I are dust;
His concepts o'er the wide world grow and grow,
As battle-fleets and guns are turned to rust.

Great statesmen may be shorn of place and power,
Yet grow to greater power with Hate's decay,
When their high-thinking comes at last to flower,
And blossoms in a more enlightened day.

A more enlightened day, which this applause
Is prologue to on this most solemn morn;
For now the tide has turned, and his great cause
Finds tongues to praise that once spake but in scorn.

. . . . . .

The Soldier to his marble home has passed;
The Scholar seeks the joys his books afford,
Content to know his teaching will outlast
The men who put his treaty to the sword.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

CHARLES A. WAGNER

One man's shoulder, another man's thigh—
The unknown soldier, here I lie.
Rest and quiet is all I seek,
Letting the chambermaid statesmen speak,
Letting the peace that they begot
Rot in the quick earth as I rot,
Letting the Peace that they declared
Fall in the pit my bones have shared,

Letting the kings and queens go by
One man's shoulder, another man's thigh.

The unknown soldier, here I lie.
One man's forehead, another man's eye,
One man's collar-bone, one man's leg
By which to lift the world a peg.
They made of me a handy penny
Because my bones are made of many;
But though my limbs are all assorted,
The brain of me is undistorted,
I all alive and full of reason
And tracking still the trail of treason. . . .

They are not dead. Their brains are steady—
The millions lying still lie heady.
Their eyes and fingers gleam and point
And there are flames from every joint.
Not one is lost, they all are known,
They tally, every thread and bone.
Their sleep is false, disturbed, unsound,
You hear it in the very ground—
It mutters: "All is not yet over,
There's more of me than tracks of clover."

One leg's a runner's, fleet and thin;
He'll bring the early violets in
And bind them in his sweetheart's hair
When love has dropped the dress of care.
One leg's a farmer's, badly torn;
He'll space the even rows with corn
And call the cows in from the field
When rust has hammered on the shield.
He'll have a daughter, tall and fair,
With purple violets in her hair.

One arm's a thief's arm, long and white;
He'll rest his head on it all night
And turn the plow from off the stone
When men take each their little throne.
One arm's a poet's, straight and strong,
For whom I sing this bit of song;
He has a violet from each eye
Continuing his sight of sky,
And from each fingertip there goes
A want that's ended in a rose.

Unknown, I haunt each palace door,
I stand upon each judgment floor.
Unknown, from out my mingled pit
I leer upon the law, new-writ.
Aye, and my tomb is made of fire
Where Heaven and Hell both draw desire;
A caldron from some God afar
To lean down and prepare a star;
A seed, deep fallen in the earth,
To reassure itself of birth!

One man's shoulder, another man's arm,
By which to steer the world from harm.
Unknown, the wind will tell my heart
And make wild roses spring and start.
Unknown, the tongues of men will turn
The fiery sentences I burn—
No mortal names to hush the cry,
But one man's shoulder, another man's thigh!
A loss where men would pity give,
A gain where thought itself may live.

They do not know my mingled thought,
They who have wreaths and speeches brought,
And doffed their hats and bowed before
The "symbol of the end of war."
My thought is further than they know
Who mingled me unknowing so:
My limbs are, shattered and unknown,
Stronger than I would be alone.
I am not one, but I am all,
I answer every soldier's call. . . .

My thought runs fire through the ground—
Each battlefield, from mound to mound,
Since first man ever learned the thrust
That made him kin to all the dust,
My thought is of another war
With love and life to battle for.
I shall be gathering by rank
And halt before Time's outer flank.
About!—and muster all the dead
Who ever falsely fell and bled.

Unknown, my song shall weave its horn
Into the ranks of the unborn.
Unknown, my strength and secret lies
(One man's shoulder, another man's eyes).
And until Love walks in the sun
I shall not lay aside this gun;
Until the busy streets proclaim
That life and beauty are the same;
Until man's voices find the power
To call each colored weed a flower.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The President Returns to America

Nancy Byrd Turner

Back to our shores he comes from the sad strand,
And some, who know so much of that and this,
And what can never be, and what's amiss,
Give him cold welcome to his native land;
But some, the humbler-hearted, understand
At least that through the strife he bears with him,
And shields as best he may with hopeful hand,
A little struggling flame, late kindled and dim.

High tide in all the waters of the world,
The winds of all the wild years up and out,
And one frail light amid their fury swirled!
It cannot perish. Strong through storm and doubt
It must burn on—to blaze at last sublime,
A watch-fire on the topmost hill of time.

THE WORLD IS ONE

Dedicated to Woodrow Wilson and His Valiant Stand for the League of Nations

Hinton White

The world is one; we cannot live apart;
To earth's remotest races we are kin;
God made the generations of one blood;
Man's separation is a sign of sin.

We breathe a common air, while sun and rain
And bounteous earth our every need supply;
Seed time is sure; the harvest fails us not;
The silent stars in beauty flood the sky.

For each thing lives to serve another's need
And serving thus, its own deep need is served.
This is the law; the centuries have seen
The planets in their courses have not swerved.

But all, harmonious, circling round the sun,
Each in its orbit, keep the balance true;
When like the planets man obeys the law,
Life more abundant shall his life renew.

Till then there is no peace in all the earth,
And though we pile our gold against the sky,
It cannot save us—when the vision fails,
Strive as we may and plead and question why.

"'Tis from yourselves ye suffer," Buddha said,
The Nazarene proclaimed the soul's high call,
"Share all thou hast." Yet blindly has man lived
Each for himself, instead of each for all.

What though we solve the secret of the stars,
Or from the vibrant ether pluck a song?
Can this for all man's tyranny atone
While Mercy weeps and waits and suffers long?

And have those rare souls lived and died in vain
Who taught redemption cometh from within?
Lay low the walls of selfishness and hate;
Lift high the gates that Love may enter in.

Put up the sword, its day of anguish past;
Disarm the forts; and then, the war-flags furled,
Forever keep the air without frontiers,
The great, free, friendly highway of the world.

So that at last to rapture men may come
And hear again the music of the spheres
And stand erect, illumined, radiant, free,
The travail and the triumph of the years.

THE PASSING OF WOODROW WILSON, PROPHET OF PEACE (1856-1924)

VINCENT G. BURNS

Once more a grieving nation bows its head
And loving tribute and memorial gives
To her heroic soldier who is dead,
Yet no! not dead, for still his spirit lives!

His spirit, bright and strong, now knows new life
Which never any enemy can destroy,
Where, truly free from all his earthly strife,
He may celestial peace and rest enjoy.

Aye! how he merits that! he who in war
Amid the fearful tumult, tempest-torn,
The burden and the brunt of battle bore,
And strove to still the whirlwind and the storm.

For when the war's deep thunder shook the earth
He stood for peace and tried to check the fight.
But what was all his noble striving worth
While cosmic passions plunged our world through night?

Still rang his voice with bell-like constancy
Guiding the ship of state through those dark days
When the nations wallowed in a bloody sea
And midst the crash of battles lost their ways.

Always with wise leadership, God-inspired,
He, more than any other living man,
Saw the way out for foes all tired,
Visioned the only hope, the inter-racial plan.

Clear-voiced and brave, above the noise and swell,
Of the war's grim chaos and the battle fray,
While gas and guns and cannon made earth hell,
He spoke out for the better kindlier way.

His was the struggle for the ideal good,
The pledging of peoples to the policy
Of peace! The bringing of the world-wide brotherhood
Of humankind, the kingdom family!

And in that effort, seemingly he failed!
For everywhere the cynics rose to scorn
And he at last upon his cross of pain was nailed,
But in that very hour the thing he loved was born.

Nought but a thought, yet what a mighty one!
Nought but a dream, and yet too great to perish;
Out of the heart of God it came, Whose will is done,
And now his will and God's are ours to cherish!

Even now the peoples hasten that great task to do,
For which his life was willingly laid down,
Our wiser time will vow his vision true;
Fear not! His head with laurel history will crown.

His name shall shine with glory in each land,
Where dawning light dispels dark ancient wrongs;
Among the world's immortals he shall stand,
Amid the throng of heroes his great soul belongs.

Illumined by his larger wisdom lies the road,
Earth's ardent youth will follow loyally,
To lift from man's bowed back this heavy load,
The common burden of humanity.

Ordained by God's wise will, he tells the way,
Now must we work to make war's folly cease,
To greet the dawn of that great glorious day
When War forever shall give place to Peace!

THE KNOWN SOLDIER

For the Day of President Wilson's Burial[1]

M. A. De Wolfe Howe

Now through the stifling air, thick with the murk
Of self and pettiness—shame's perfect work—
A sense of greatness spreads from sea to sea;
For greatness was, when, bound in unity
Of generous aim, men of our blended race
Stood looking each into his neighbor's face

[1] February 7, 1924.

And said, "This towering thought, this cleaving word
Speaks for America"—and the world heard.
Then, with new vision of unwonted scope,
They lifted up their eyes to the hills of hope.
Today remembered greatness stirs again
The spirit that kindled once the hearts of men.
And out from smoldering embers starts a flame
Fanned by the whisper of a burning name.

Humblest and highest to that greatness thrill,
For the known soldier, dauntless of heart and will,
Mortally stricken in the long-drawn fray,
Reviling none, a wounded leader, lay,
And passed in silence to the eternal rest
Wherewith the soldier of the spirit is blest,
For all his weariness, his strength outpoured,
Blest even as soldier of the sword.

Proud stands his country, bared and bowed of head,
While safe he sleeps among the deathless dead.

TO ONE WHO PASSED

Woodrow Wilson

Louise Burton Laidlaw

Great men have passed
Remembered now by none,
Shall we forget at last
The work which thou hast done?
Not so, Great Heart,
Though thou art sped indeed,
Thine was a gift apart,
Thy vision still shall lead.

WOODROW WILSON

Emma Vories Meyer

That all the world might smile again, I gave
Of all the strength the Master gave to me;
With faith and hope and prayer I tried to pave
The way for Peace I did not live to see.

My going was "a tragedy"? Not so!
To crown with Death an interrupted plan
Is not to fail! . . . God loosened—slow—
The strangling hold of flesh—and freed the man!

Beneath the flag, the ferns and roses, lies
The form you mourn; but I, with nothing dearth,
See future faces lifted to the skies,
And hear their clear glad voices: "Peace on Earth!"

WOODROW WILSON—1856-1924

MARGUERITE MOOERS MARSHALL

The chill of No Man's Land had touched his lips
They shaped the phrase his simplest soldiers knew,
And "I am ready," Wilson said. So sips
One who accepts the cup, whate'er the brew.

Not his that hell-broth Europe stirred and quaffed;
He must have prayed, "Take Thou this cup from me!"
And yet he drained it—else a world had laughed
To scorn its hope and faith: democracy.

He served and saved the faith; his banner bore
A strange device, *Idealist,* alone
He thought and fought when others thrust no more
Against unthinking, selfish ranks—*their own!*

He fought for victory . . . *he fell for peace.*
For brotherhood that would not fight again.
He asked a suffering world to choose release
From sick and spiteful hates of men for men.

And we denied him. He was ready, still,
To take defeat and broken body away;
To hold calm purpose he might not fulfil—
The clear white mind burned on. It burns to-day!

An enemy once framed a verdict sure,
That all his meaning and its greatness caught
"Only one conqueror's work will long endure—
One conqueror's work"—said Harden—"Wilson's thought."

XIV

THE FEDERATION OF THE WORLD

THE PATH OF SAFETY

The way to make war impossible is to be so strong as to make victory certain.—Mr. Winston Churchill

ANONYMOUS

Two jolly German Barons lived in castles by the Rhine—
The noble Lord von Donnerblitz, the Graf von Schlagenstein:
Though truculent and haughty, they had been at peace for years,
For each was rather chary of the other's fifty spears:

Till the steward of von Donnerblitz observed to him one day,
"Through worry over Schlagenstein your hair is turning grey;
With this absurd equality of force one never knows
But what some little incident may see us changing blows.

"A learned man once told me, and I feel that he was right,
'To the teeth you must be armed if you are anxious not to fight;
If you feel no taste for quarrels where the parties stab and hack
You must be so strong that nobody can possibly attack.'

"If another fifty lances you permit me to engage
You will never need to worry over neighbors in a rage,
In the peace of perfect safety we may cultivate the vine,
And you need not care a pfennig for the Graf von Schlagenstein."

"Well said," exclaimed his master, "What a head the man has got!
Go forth, my faithful henchman, and enlist them on the spot."
But this little conversation, by a traitor overheard,
Next morning to his rival was repeated, every word.

"Potztausend!" quoth the latter, "What the rascal says is true,
If you'd keep at peace with one, you must be strong enough for two;
So to put an end to panics, to suspicions, doubts and fears,
We'll increase at once our forces by a hundred lusty spears."

On this, of course, his neighbor found a similar increase
Had imposed itself upon him—in the interests of peace:

So he hired some English archers at a most enormous salary
And re-fortified his castle with a machicoulis gallery.

To-day each pays the wages of a thousand men-at-arms,
Yet neither knows a respite from suspicions and alarms;
And still two bankrupt barons are recruiting by the Rhine—
The noble Lord von Donnerblitz, the Graf von Schlagenstein.

A MESSAGE OF PEACE

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

There was once a pirate, greedy and bold,
  Who ravaged for gain, and saved the spoils;
Till his coffers were bursting with blood-stained gold,
  And millions of captives bore his toils.

Then fear took hold of him, and he cried:
  "I have gathered enough; now, war should cease!"
And he sent out messengers far and wide
  (To the strong ones only) to ask for peace.

"We are Christian brethren!" thus he spake;
  "Let us seal a contract—never to fight!
Except against rebels who dare to break
  The bonds we have made by the victor's right."

And the strong ones listen; and some applaud
  The kindly offer and righteous word;
With never a dream of deceit or fraud,
  They would spike the cannon and break the sword.

But others, their elders, listen and smile
  At the sudden convert's unctuous style.
  They watch for the peacemaker's change of way;
  Even now, while his godly messengers speak,
  His guns are aflame on his enemies weak.
  He has stolen the blade from the hand of his foe,
  And he strikes the unarmed a merciless blow.

  To the ends of the earth his oppression runs;
  The rebels are blown from the mouths of his guns.
  His war-tax devours his subject's food;
  He taxes their evil and taxes their good;

He taxes their salt till he rots their blood.
He leaps on the friendless as on a prey,
And slinks, tail-down, from the strong one's way.
The pharisee's cant goes up for peace,
But the cries of his victims never cease;
The stifled voices of brave men rise
From a thousand cells; while his rascal spies
Are spending their blood-money fast and free.

And this is the Christian to oversee
A world of evil! a saint to preach!
A holy well-doer come to teach!
A prophet to tell us war should cease!
A pious example of Christian peace!

TO ONE WHO DENIES THE POSSIBILITY OF A PERMANENT PEACE

MARGARET SACKVILLE

Old friend, I greet you! you are still the same:
You poisoned Socrates, you crucified
Christ, you have persecuted, mocked, denied,
Rejected God and cursed Him in God's name.
You gave monotonously to the flame
All those (whom now you honor) when the new
Truth stung their lips—for fear it might be true;
Then reaped where they had sown and felt no shame.

Familiar voice, old adversary—hail!
Yesterday's fools are now your gods. Behold!
The generations pass and we can wait.
You slandered Darwin, Florence Nightingale;
Now a new splendour quivers in the cold
Grey shadows overhead; still you are late.

AN EX-SERVICE MAN MAKES A VOW

VINCENT G. BURNS

War is a way the statesmen play,
Getting gain from a world in pain;
Perhaps they will say on some future day
"Let us try this game again!"

Patriot wags with the same old gags
Will exhort to enlist once more,
Hand us guns and drums with their battle-flags
For the sport of that field of gore,

Where rockets flare and field-guns blare
Their tidings of terrible doom,
Where the chlorined air deals death everywhere
Till earth is one ghastly tomb.

A hard hill's crest, a machine-gun nest—
There the bayonets will do their worst!
But God I've confessed I will do my best
That the foe will kill me first!

I'd rather die like a pig in a stye
With a bullet through my head,
Than hear that cry where the red heaps lie—
The last, soft sob of the dead!

Oh! God in heaven, let loose Thy leaven
Of Love in the hearts of men,
That forgiving seventy times the seven
Our world may have Peace! Amen.

"NEXT TIME"

LAURA SIMMONS

The order goes; what if we rush ahead
With friendly shouts—with welcoming and cheer
And loyal clasp of fellowship—instead
Of lethal gas, and bombs that maim and sear—
"Next time"?

If, in accord, the armies look afar
Where droops a Figure on a Cross; and hear,
"Of all my woe, Ye make a mockery!"
With Him allied—what cause have we to fear—
"Next time"?

Firm in our faith, we stand together there—
Comrades and brothers; if we must be slain
So let our captains take us; but Beware!
They *cannot make us ope His wounds again*—
"Next time"!

THE FARMERS OUTLAW WEEDS

VINCENT G. BURNS

The farmer lords of Podunkville proclaimed a big conclave
To take up various ways and means their wide-flung crops to save;
It seems that weeds were running wild across the countryside,
They swamped the pastures, choked the trees, and half the crops had died.

So, gathered in the courthouse on the square, at half-past two,
There met a solemn session to decide just what to do.
They crowded in from vale and town and Podunk's farthest border,
Till Sheriff Jones stood up and gravely called the crowd to order:

"Now men that ye are here consarned with this momentus object,
I'm agoin' ta call on Deacon Smith to introjuce the subject! . . ."
A snicker, then a roar went up (for weeds Smith's farm was worst!)
But Deacon Smith just cleared his throat, then gulped as if in thirst,

Said he: "As 'tellgent folk we all do know our present need,
This hull world looks ta me and you to kill this pesky weed,
If we don't act mankind will die, and so sez I to you,
Outlaw, renounce, declare this weed forevermore taboo!"

The laughter changed at once to cheers, hurrahs rang through the crowd.
'Twas very plain that Deacon Smith had done himself most proud.
Amid the gale of mad applause a youth rose to his feet;
He spoke with bold, clear voice, that men might hear out on the street:

"This resolution is a joke, you can't kill weeds that way!
Disperse, go home, roll up your sleeves, and go to work today!
Pull up your weeds, by root and branch, from every piece of land,
Uprooting, not outlawing, is the thing that weeds can't stand!

"You hypocrites, you've dodged the facts in blindness all your days,
And now you think that motions will correct your lazy ways?"
With hoots and calls and mockery they drove him from the hall.
"A fool!" "An ass!" "A young moron!" they shouted, one and all.

With pompous pride and gesture then they passed their resolution,
Denouncing weeds in scathing terms of fiercest absolution!
Decrying all the evils that the weeds were liable for!
Declaring weeds anathema, outlawed forevermore!

But while this solemn conference passed laws to outlaw weeds
The summer air of Podunkville was loaded full with seeds;
They fell in golden showers on each and every fertile field,
And prophesied that Podunkville would have a bumper yield.

Though Podunk's leading farmers had pronounced their pious curse,
Both far and near in Podunkville the weeds grew worse and worse;
They spread and spread until they wrecked each human habitation,
And soon the place called Podunkville was one vast desolation.

Now strangers passing there today behold the awful scene
And shake their heads in sorrow for the town that might have been.
Here is, good friend, a parable of truth, if nothing more,
For diplomats who resolute against the weed called WAR!

IMPERIALISM

Bertrand Shadwell

If you see an island shore which has not been grabb'd before,
Lying in the track of trade as islands should;
With the simple native quite unprepared to make a fight,
O you just step in and take it for his good.

O you just step in and take it for his good,
Not for money be it clearly understood.
But you row yourself to land with a Bible in your hand,
Crime is Christian when it's clearly understood.

WAR AND HELL [1]

Ernest Crosby

The old, old dream of empire—the dream of Alexander and Cæsar, of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan;
The dream of subject peoples carrying out our sovereign will through fear;

[1] Excerpt.

The dream of a universe forced to converge upon us;
The dream of pride and loftiness justified by strength of arms;
The dream of our arbitrary "Yea" overcoming all "Nays" whatsoever;
The dream of a cold, stern, hated machine of empire!

But there is a more enticing dream: the dream of wise freedom made contagious;
The dream of gratitude rising from broken fetters;
The dream of coercion laid prostrate once for all;
The dream of nations in love with each other, without a thought of hatred or danger;
The dream of tyrants stripped of their tyrannies, and oppressors despoiled of their prey;
The dream of a warm, throbbing, one-hearted empire of brothers!

II

Clear the field for the grand tournament of the nations!
The struggle to think the best thought, and to express it, in tone and color and form and word;
The struggle to do the greatest deeds, and lead the noblest and most useful lives;
The struggle to see clearest and know truest and love strongest.
Your other blood and bludgeon contests but postpone the real fray.
The true knights are yearning to enter the lists, and you block the high festival with your brawling.
Is it possible you mistake this for the real event of history?
Away with your brutal disorder, and clear the field for the tournament of Man.

LOVE COMES

ERNEST CROSBY

And who will lead the way?
The good and wise must lead.
He that loves most is the best and wisest, and he it is that leads already.
Violence will not yield to violence. Tell the great secret to the people.
Love comes! Clear the way, ye institutions, ye laws and customs of ages of hate!
The glance of his eyes would wither you.
The quiet thrill of his voice would palsy your deepest foundations.
Ye do well to tremble at his name.

For he is the Revolution—at last the true, long-deferred Revolution.
Love is the true Revolution, for Love alone strikes at the very root of ill.
Let the people love, and they will lead,
Let the people love and theirs is the power!

THE NEW STATE[1]

George Sterling

O dark and cruel State
Whose towers are altars unto self alone,—
  Whose streets with tears are wet,
And half thy councils given unto hate!
Shall Time not hurl thy temples stone from stone,
  And o'er the ruin set
A fairer city than the years have known?
Out of thy darkness do we find us dreams,
  And on the future gleams
The vision of thy ramparts built anew.
Mammon and War sit now a double throne,
Yet what we dream, a wiser Age shall do.

Be ye lift up, O everlasting gates
Of that fair city men shall build for man!
  O fairer Day that waits,
The splendor of whose dawn we shall not see,
When selfish bonds of family and clan
Melt in the higher love that yet shall be!
O State without a master or a slave,
  Whose law of light we crave
Ere morning widen on a world set free!

THE NEW MARS

Florence Earle Coates

I war against the folly that is War,
  The sacrifice that pity hath not stayed,
The Great Delusion men have perished for,
  The lie that hath the souls of men betrayed:
I war for justice and for human right,
Against the lawless tyranny of Might.

[1] From "Ode on the Exposition."

A monstrous cult has held the world too long:
The worship of a Moloch that hath slain
Remorselessly the young, the brave, the strong,—
Indifferent to the unmeasured pain,
The accumulated horror and despair,
That stricken Earth no longer wills to bear.

My goal is *peace*,—not peace at any price,
While yet ensanguined jaws of Evil yawn
Hungry and pitiless: Nay, peace were vice
Until the cruel dragon-teeth be drawn,
And the wronged victims of Oppression be
Delivered from its hateful rule, and free!

When comes that hour, resentment laid aside,
Into a ploughshare will I beat my sword;
The weaker Nations' strength shall be my pride,
Their gladness my exceeding great reward;
And not in vain shall be the tears now shed,
Nor vain the service of the gallant dead.

. . . . . .

I war against the folly that is War,
The futile sacrifice that nought hath stayed,
The Great Delusion men have perished for,
The lie that hath the souls of men betrayed:
For faith I war, humanity and trust;
For peace on earth,—a lasting peace, and just!

TO THEE, MY COUNTRY

Louise Burton Laidlaw

America, unbend that troubled brow!
Why stay thy steps when thou mightst lead the way—
Usher the world into the fuller day,
With vision high the war-rent world endow?
O, trust it is not late to turn e'en now;
The nations from their mountain home now call:
Haste, join them in their mighty council hall.
Fulfill the pledge thou once didst take—thy vow

To make the world a safer place that Peace
Might hold her sway, and Freedom's light increase.
Work with thy sister states, ah, do thy share!
The League calls clear, speed forth lest high hopes fall.
Dear Land, wilt thou take council of despair—
Shall false and foolish fears hold thee in thrall?

ANSWER WORLD!

ANGELA MORGAN

"Yes, I believe in armies—
Beautiful, sun-bright armies,
Rising out of the ruins of war
As riseth the morning star;
Swift to the world's salvation,
Splendid, equipped and strong,
Not nation armed against nation,
But men arrayed against wrong.
Braving the perilous places
Where evil and war begin,
Where the deadliest woe of the race is—
Smiting the foe within.

When shall we go where shame and lechery grin,
Break the door, enter in,
Lift the Magdalen's eyes:
'Sister, arise!
Too long for us have you walked the path of the dead,
Too long have our lusts been fed.'
Yes, I believe in armies,
Real men to fight real foes;
Striking straight where the harm is,
Where the root of avarice grows.
O men who thrill
To the bugle shrill,
Have you ever seen
The pitiful, lean
Cheek of a starving child?

Have you heard the wild
Desperate wail of the mother who could not pay
Thrust to the icy street on a brutal day? . . .
Picture it now: a broken bed, a chair,
A wretched shawl to cover her despair—

Poor little wreck of a human mother's nest
Sprawling upon the pavement's hostile breast!
This have I seen and more than my pen may tell—
Yea, with these eyes have I looked on the depths of hell
Where men and women, better under the sod—
Men and women, made in the likeness of God!—
Rotted in filth and poverty and disease,
While wealth went glittering by in its golden ease!
Answer, world! *when shall we fight for these?*

Which of you shall spring to the people's plight?
Answer, soldiers! you who are trained to fight!
I saw two children once—their mother in prison I think—
God! shall I put it in ink?
My shuddering flesh faints when I think of those children,
Think of their dirt, their red-eyed, horrible plight;
Even now as I write,
With the shield of the years between,
I am sick at what I have seen.
O men, O women, you shrink!
You raise offended hands to your horrified eyes—
Would you cure the sore by disguise?
Would you hide the festering wound with tinsel and lace?
Well, cover your face,
Smile and smother your soul as you may,
There will come a day! . . .

Yes, I believe in armies, weaponed with nobler laws,
Marching straight
To the enemy's gate
To fight the human cause.
Searching the leprous places
Where sin and pestilence hide,
Where the real foe of the race is,
To smite the leer from the faces
Of Privilege, Lust and Pride.

Hail, ye men of the future!
The world's real patriots ye!
Above the dead I hear your tread that sets the people free!
And I hear the fife, and I hear the drum,
I hear the shouting wherever you come,
And I see the glory in your face
Who march to save the race!

Justice shall be your weapon and the Truth the bomb you hurl,
Flag of united nations the banner you unfurl.
Hail men of the present—do I hear your answering cry?
"Here am I! Here am I!"

RED FLAG

RALPH CHEYNEY

This is no time for tears, no place for mournful poses.
We have a trust to fill before our brief day closes.

A hundred thousand Saccos and Vanzettis starkly die
Whose agonizing arms accuse the stormy, blooded sky

On battlefields, in dismal mills and dank, dark mines,
In fetid tenements and on brave, far-flung picket-lines.

Whence comes the hue that stains the workers' flag so red?
The rich have dyed it deep with the blood of our slaughtered dead.

It is they who have sown the tempest, they who have made it war.
Our children shall win to freedom; theirs shall pay the score.

THE INTERNATIONALIST

LOUIS GINSBERG

Though rains of jeering pelt with hissing sneers;
  Though winds of creeds their raucous bluster shout;
Though storms of sects and parties drench the land;
  Though gales of a derision howl about;

He stands in windy storming—stands alone,
  Whom sullen raining cannot pierce or soak;
For rooted in his faith, he calmly dons
  This darkened tempest like a warming cloak.

His brow is ploughed by bitterness of men,
  But scourges turn to tongues of glory yet!
His back is bent with folly of the world,
  Who takes his lashing for an epaulet!

Not all the anguish nor the bitter tears
  Can challenge Time as when his thought is heard;

Not all the thundering of all the guns
  Reverberates through ages as his word.

Banners of vision burn about his word:
  Destinies crowd and bow before his plan;
And Dawn, that kindles in his eyes, illumes
  The rising temple in the heart of man!

WHITE FEATHER

PHILIP M. HARDING

Strike on, Great Nations, wage new armaments,
Spit on your swords!—I like the gesture well.
The "Field o' Glory" beckons. . . . Never think
That you may squeeze the bullets out in hell!

Conjure new gases, that the living wine
Of all that feed you—fish and fowl and grain—
May wither into smoke! . . . I only ask
To watch your bodies rotting clean again.

THE INTERNATIONALISTS

PHILIP M. HARDING

Freed from Tradition's bloody racks,
  New Youth breaks through its stinking moats—
The hands of God upon their backs,
  The song of Christ along their throats!

They come! New challenges are hurled
  Up stars! . . . Arm-linked, beside their wives,
There's no flag in the whole wide world
  Worth one split-second of their lives!

PARADOX

BENJAMIN MUSSER

We are a regiment, whose martial cry
Is the cry of peace! Above war's puppet dead
Our avenging banner trails across the sky,
Till the sky itself streams red.

For each bewildered soldier flung to your foe,
For every godlike man you force to a gun,
A comrade joins our army, to overthrow
Your war till our war be won.

Trampling your law that kills, our steady tread
Is matched by a ghostly echo: keeping our stride,
A brother walks with each from your enemy's dead,
Your own slain march at our side.

RUSSIA: 1918

M. C. Sinclair

Oh, hear them! Hear their voices rise at last!
Hear them, serene and sure! Again! Again!
Oh, hear the voices of the workingmen!
The long, long day of servitude is past!
They do not crave the right to speak: they speak!
The voices of the workingmen are firm,
For they have found deliverance and the term;
They find the weak grown strong, the strong grown weak.

No spoil of conquest by a kingly creed!
No shining victors, ravening to feed
Upon the shattered vanquished! They are wise
Who hear the terms and heed; the fools revise—
And are revised; the workingmen have said!
A world is born, the kingly creeds are dead!

WAGE-SLAVES TO WAR-MAKERS

Ralph Cheyney

We have no land for which to fight
Except where Russia cracks the night.
This is your land, within your power.
We break the rock; you pluck the flower.
We build the roads on which you speed.
And when we strike for what we need
We learn at once how well you own
The press, the courts and every stone

Of every structure that we rear.
Say, what invaders shall we fear?
Why should we care out on the job
If you or others drive and rob?

We have no land for which to fight
Though all the world is ours by right.
We workers grimed with soot and mud
Have shed enough and more of blood.
Each office-building overhead
Is built on corpses of our dead.
We have no quarrel across the foam
But here within our jail, your home!
We give our pledge we shall not kill,
For ours the braver, kinder will.
But if you force us till we do,
It will be you, it will be you!

THE TOILERS

EDWIN MARKHAM

Their blind feet drift in the darkness, and no one is leading:
Their toil is the pasture, where harpies and jackals are feeding—
In all lands and always, the wronged, the homeless, the humbled
Till the granite pride of the spoiler is shaken and crumbled,
Till the Pillars of Hell are uprooted and left to their ruin,
And a rose-garden gladdens the places no rose ever blew in,
Where now men huddle together and whisper and harken,
Or hold their bleak hands over embers that die out and darken.
The anarchies gather and thunder: few, few are the fraters,
And loud is the revel at night in the camp of the traitors. . . .
Say, Shelley, where are you—where are you? our hearts are a-breaking!
The fight in the terrible darkness—the shame—the forsaking!

The leaves shower down and are sport for the winds that come after;
And so are the toilers in all lands the jest and the laughter
Of nobles—the Toilers scourged on in the furrow as cattle,
Or flung as a meat to the cannons that hunger in battle.

GOD AND THE STRONG ONES

Margaret Widdemer

"We have made them fools and weak!" said the Strong Ones:
"We have bound them, they are dumb and deaf and blind,
We have crushed them in our hands like a heap of crumbling sands,
We have left them naught to seek or find:
They are quiet at our feet!" said the Strong Ones,
"We have made them one with wood and stone and clod;
Serf and laborer and woman, they are less than wise or human!—"
"I shall raise the weak," saith God.

"They are stirring in the dark!" said the Strong Ones,
"They are struggling, who were moveless like the dead,
We can hear them cry and strain hand and foot against the chain,
We can hear their heavy upward tread—
What if they are restless?" said the Strong Ones,
"What if they have stirred beneath the rod?
Fools and weak and blinded men, we can tread them down again—"
"Shall ye conquer Me?" saith God.

"They are evil and are brutes!" said the Strong Ones,
"They are ingrates of the ease and peace we give,
We have stooped to them in grace and they mock us to our face—
How shall we give light to them and live?
They are all unworthy grace!" said the Strong Ones,
"They that cowered at our lightest look and nod—"
"This that now ye pause and weigh of your grace may prove one day
Mercy that ye need!" saith God.

"They will trample us and bind!" said the Strong Ones:
"We are crushed beneath the blackened feet and hands!
All the strong and fair and great they will crush from out the State,
They will whelm it like the weight of pressing sands—
They are maddened and are blind!" said the Strong Ones,
"Black decay has come where they have trod—
They will break the world in twain if their hands are on the rein—"
"What is that to Me?" saith God.

"Ye have made them in their strength, who were Strong Ones,
Ye have only taught the blackness ye have known;
These are evil men and blind? Ay, but molded to your mind!
How can ye cry out against your own?
Ye have held the light and beauty I have given
Far above the muddied ways where they must plod,
Ye have builded this your lord with the lash and with the sword—
Reap what ye have sown!" said God.

FROM "THE SONG OF THE UPRISING"

JAMES OPPENHEIM

Unbearable sorrow!
Fiendish anguish!
Among the old that line the streets, among the faded and the war-worn,
Radiant miles of youth glow by, laughing with the bugles,
Radiant rivers of youth flow by,
Flow into the trenches. . . .

I see the Hell they have entered
With its pitiless flame-fledged skies,
With its mud and stenchent carrion,
With the murderer and the murdered. . . .
I see the Hell they have entered and
The radiance gone out. . . .

O my heart . . .
How terrible is the age we dwell in. . . .
Roll, muffled drums, you heart-beats of despair,
Boom, O you brass, for the burial of our boys. . . .

Beloved, beloved,
How can we abide on the mountain of our joy
Where even touched with sunrise we quiver through invisible nerves to the ends of Earth,
And the agony of man darkens our dawn. . . .
We must descend into the pit of a thousand million outstretched, imploring hands,
The pit of bloody faces, and wailing lips. . . .
Down to the sorrow of Earth,
The anguish of Man.

For Earth, like a staring maniac, bearing a firebrand,
Goes shrieking down the skies,
Shrieking "Famine!"—shrieking "Pestilence!"—shrieking "War!"
That orb of destruction burns balefully in the august magnificence of might. . . .
The mad world runs amuck . . .
Is Man ending himself?
Is the miracle of that mind and passion which dreamed and built Asia and Europe
Stopped in suicidal madness?
Beloved, were we born to see this, and to live this?
Are we among the doomed? . . .

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
And be ye uplift, you everlasting doors. . . .
The glory of the Lord is risen upon us . . .
We shall not bend before the storm: we shall not bow before great death;
We put the darkness from us with a loud shout:
We put the temptation of despair away with resolution:
We arise: we arise clothed with courage:
We arise: we are that which has refused darkness: we are MAN . . .
Man, the fire-bringer,
Man, the Creator.
We call mountain to mountain . . .
We raise a torch of Revolution . . .
We bring forth the peoples out of their darkness
And the nations out of their wrath . . .
We behold the Earth in parturition . . .
We see the Mother in birth-throes . . .
We greet the child with calls of welcome and the sound of cities of joy. . . .

O blow, you bugles, with triumph,
O shout, you peoples, with victory. . . .
Hurl down the mighty from their seats,
And raise yourselves to freedom. . . .
Raise up yourselves, ye toiling peoples . . .
Be upraised, ye sorrowers and ye spent ones,
Get up on the peaks of the morning and proclaim the triumph of Man,
The victory of Man,

Get up on the peaks of the morning and greet the child, the
New Age,
On table lands of democracy,
On heights of man, the Creator,
Get ye up, get ye up, get ye up, ye triumphing peoples . . .
New Man is born from the Old;
Joy shall leap laughing from Sorrow.

THE NEW GOD[1]

WITTER BYNNER

In temporary pain
The age is bearing a new breed
Of men and women, patriots of the world
And one another. Boundaries in vain,
Birthrights and countries, would constrain
The old diversity of seed
To be diversity of soul.
O mighty patriots, maintain
Your loyalty!—till flags unfurled
For battle shall arraign
The traitors who unfurled them, shall remain
And shine over an army with no slain,
And men from every nation shall enroll,
And women—in the hardihood of peace!
What can my anger do but cease?
Whom shall I fight and who shall be my enemy
When he is I and I am he?
Let me have done with that old God outside
Who watched with preference and answered prayer,
The Godhead that replied
Now here, now there,
Where heavy cannon were
Or coins of gold!
Let me receive communion with all men
Acknowledging our one and only soul!
For not till then
Can God be God till we ourselves are whole!

[1] Excerpt.

DAYBREAK

Louis Untermeyer

Three years of night and nightmare, years of black
Hate and its murderous attack,
Three years of midnight terrors till the brain,
Beaten in the intolerable campaign,
Saw nothing but a world of driven men
And skies that never could be clean again;
Hot winds that tore the lungs, great gusts
Of rotting madness and forgotten lusts;
Hills draped with death; the beat of terrible wings;
Flowers that smelt of carrion; monstrous things
That crawled on iron bellies over trees
And swarmed in blood, till even the seas
Were one wet putrefaction, and the earth
A violated grave of trampled mirth.
What light there was, was only there to show
Intolerance delivering blow on blow,
Bigotry rampant, honor overborne,
And faith derided with a blast of scorn.
This was our daily darkness; we had thought
All freedom worthless and all beauty nought.
The eager, morning-hearted days were gone
When we took joy in small things: in the sun,
Tracing a delicate pattern through thick leaves,
With its long, yellow pencils; or blue eaves
Frosted with moonlight, and one ruddy star
Ringing against the night, a chime
Like an insistent, single rhyme;
Or see the full-blown moon stuck on a spar,
A puff-ball flower on a rigid stalk;
Or think of nothing better than to walk
With one small boy and listen to the war
Of waters pulling at a stubborn shore;
Or laugh to see the waves run out of bounds
Like boisterous and shaggy hounds;
Watching the stealthy rollers come alive,
And shake their silver manes and leap and dive;
Or listen with him to the voiceless talk
Of fireflies and daisies, feel the late
Dusk full of unheard music or vibrate

To a more actual magic, hear the notes
Of birds with sunset shaking on their throats;
Or watch the emerald and olive trees
Turn purple ghosts in dusty distances;
The city's kindling energy; the sweet
Pastoral of an empty street;
Football and friends; lyrics and daffodils;
The sovereign splendor of the marching hills—
These were all ours to choose from and enjoy
Until this foul disease came to destroy
The casual beneficence of life.

But now a thin edge, like a merciful knife,
Pierces the shadows, and a chiseling ray
Cuts the thick folds away.
Murmurs of morning, glad, awakening cries,
Hints of majestic rhythms, rise.
Dawn will not be denied. The blackness shakes,
And here a brand and there a beacon breaks
Into the glory that will soon be hurled
Over a cleared, rejuvenated world—
A world of bright democracies, of fair
Disputes, desires, tolerances everywhere,
With laughter loose again, and time enough
To feel the warm-lipped and cool-fingered love,
With kindly passion lifted from the dead,
Where daylight shall be bountifully spread,
And darkness but a wide and welcome bed.

PROPHECY

F. A. Dewson

There is coming, my friend, as surely as water drops,
a wide eyed breed, a clear eyed brood,
clean as God's winds
with a vision sent of Him,
who will not deride previous generations,
but who will ignore their smoke and ashes,
who will bury their ruck, rubbish and broken idols,
forget their bunk, bunkers and debunkers,
despise their hatreds, intrigues, their politicians,
their chicanery, grafts, greeds, wars, pomps and prides.

These will drink of clean springs of Mind
that this generation knows not of.
They will know clean springs of Mind
from which will come the brotherhood of man,
the world's greatest good, a higher and fuller life,
and a greater love, each man for his brother.

They will discern what is and ever was:
God's creation here, now, ready
for the prodigal to turn again and find it.
They will see Love as the only force
and Man made in His image,
so will they change the world.

THE DESIRE OF NATIONS

EDWIN MARKHAM

And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—Isaiah

Earth will go back to her lost youth,
And life grow deep and wonderful as truth,
When the wise King out of the nearing Heaven comes
To break the spell of long millenniums—
To build with song again
The broken hope of men—
To hush and heroize the world,
Under the flag of Brotherhood unfurled.
And He will come some day:
Already is His star upon the way!
He comes, O world, He comes!
But not with bugle-cry nor roll of doubling drums.

Nay, for He comes to loosen and unbind,
To build the lofty purpose in the mind,
To stir the heart's deep chord. . . .
No rude horns parleying, no shock of shields;
Nor as of old the glory of the Lord
To half-awakened shepherds in the fields,
Looking with foolish faces on the rush
Of the Great Splendor, when the pulsing hush
Came o'er the hills, came o'er the heavens afar
Where on their cliff of stars the watching seraphs are.

Nor as of old when first the Strong One trod,
The Power of sepulchers—our Risen God!
When on that deathless morning in the dark,
He quit the Garden of the Sepulcher,
Setting the oleander boughs astir,
And pausing at the gate with backward hark.
Nay, nor as when the Hero-King of Heaven
Came with upbraiding to his faint Eleven,
And found the world-way to his bright feet barred,
And hopeless then because men's hearts were hard.

Nor will He come like carnal kings of old,
With pomp of pilfered gold;
Nor like the pharisees with pride of prayer;
Nor as the stumbling foolish stewards dream
In tedious argument and milkless creed.
But in the passion of the heart-warm deed
Will come the Man Supreme.
Yea, for He comes to lift the Public Care—
To build on earth the Vision hung in air.
This is the one fulfilment of his Law—
The one Fact in the mockeries that seem.
This is the vision that the prophets saw—
The Comrade Kingdom builded in their dream.
No, not as in that elder day
Comes now the King upon the human way.
He comes with power: his white unfearing face
Shines through the Social Passion of the race.
He comes to frame the freedom of the Law,
To touch these men of earth
With a feeling of life's oneness and its worth,
A feeling of its mystery and awe.

And when He comes into the world gone wrong,
He will rebuild her beauty with a song.
To every heart He will its own dream be:
One moon has many phantoms in the sea.
Out of the North the norns will cry to men:
"Baldur the Beautiful has come again!"
The flutes of Greece will whisper from the dead:
"Apollo has unveiled his sunbright head!"
The stones of Thebes and Memphis will find voice:
"Osiris comes: O tribes of Time, rejoice!"
And social architects who build the State,
Serving the Dream at citadel and gate,

Will hail Him coming through the labor-hum.
And glad quick cries will go from man to man:
"Lo, He has come, our Christ the Artisan—
The King who loved the lilies, He has come!"

He will arrive, our Counselor and Chief;
And with bleak faces lighted up will come
The earth-worn mothers from their martyrdom,
To tell Him of their grief.
And glad girls caroling from field and town
Will go to meet Him with the labor-crown,
The new crown woven of the heading wheat.
And men will sit down at his sacred feet;
And He will say—the King—
"Come, let us live the poetry we sing!"
And these, his burning words, will break the ban—
Words that will grow to be
On continent, on sea,
The rallying cry of man. . . .
He comes to make the long injustice right—
Comes to push back the shadow of the night,
The gray Tradition full of flint and flaw—
Comes to wipe out the insults to the soul,
The insults of the Few against the Whole,
The insults they make righteous with a law.

Yea, He will bear the Safety of the State;
For in his still and rhythmic steps will be
The power and music of Alcyone,
Who holds the swift heavens in their starry fate.
Yea, He will lay on souls the power of peace,
And send on kingdoms torn the sense of home—
More than the fire of Joy that burned on Greece,
More than the light of Law that rose on Rome.

THE NEW CITY

MARGUERITE WILKINSON

Have we seen her, The New City, O my brothers, where she stands,
The superb, supreme creation of unnumbered human hands:

The complete and sweet expression of unnumbered human souls,
Bound by love to work together while their love their work controls;
Built by brothers for their brothers, kept by sisters for their mates,
Garlanded by happy children, playing free within the gates,
Brooded by such mighty mothers as are born to lift us up
Till we drink in full communion of God's wondrous "loving cup"?

Clean and sightly are her pavements ringing sound beneath men's feet,
Wide and ample are her forums where her citizens may meet,
Fair and precious are her gardens where her youths and maidens dance
In the fresh, pure air of Heaven, 'mid the flowers' extravagance.
And her schools are as the ladders to the Spirit, from the Clay,
Leading, round by round, to labor, strengthened, side by side, with play,
And her teachers are her bravest, and her governors her best,
For she loves the little children she has nourished at her breast.

Never clangor of the trumpet, nor the hiss of bullets mad
Breaks the music of her fountains, plashing seaward, flashing glad,
For no excess and no squalor mark her fruitful, fair increase—
She has wrought life's final glory in a miracle of peace,
And her citizens live justly, without gluttony or need,
And he strives to serve the city who has bread enough to feed
All his own, and she must labor, who would hold an honored place
With the women of the city in their dignity and grace.

Have ye seen her, O my brothers, The New City, where each hour
Is a poet's revelation, or a hero's perfect power,
Or an artist's new creation, or a laborer's new strength,
Where a world of aspiration clings God by the feet, at length?
Have ye seen her, The New City, in her glory? Ah, not yet
Gilds the sun with actual splendor chimney top and minaret,
But her site is surely purchased and her pattern is designed,
And her blessed ways are visions for all striving humankind!

The New City, O my brothers, we ourselves shall never see—
She will gladden children's children into holy ecstasy—
Let our lives be in the building! We shall lay us in the sod
Happier, if our human travail builds their avenues to God!

OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER

W. H. Anderson

The patient world through all its cycled years
Has borne its human burden, murmuring not—
A selfish horde, almost by God forgot—
A theme to flood the Universe with tears!
From that far distance where there first appears
A ray to pierce the dark conglomerate blot
Spewed from Creation's maw, the common lot
Of man, the creature, changes not nor veers:
A current rushing on from naught to naught,
Turgid and turbulent, 'twixt narrow banks
Of grasping greed and centered self-endeavor;
Each drop impregnate with the single thought
Of striving till all others it outranks,
Blind in its petty Now to vast Forever!

II

This is the picture painted; this the view
Of cynic solons in our halls of State,
Venting their venomed envy in debate,
Cruel and heartless as a pirate's crew,
Shackling the many for the selfish few,
Clasping the hasp upon the book of Fate,
Seeking the elder Cain to emulate—
"Are we our brothers' keepers?" Nay, not you!
But the great world is. War has fixed its fangs
Just once too often in the human breast,
And roused the nations to their sole surcease.
Nor shall we fail to heed our brothers' pangs.
The serried legions of this glorious West
Shall head the vanguard of the hosts of Peace!

LOCKSLEY HALL

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nation's airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.

XV

IN MEMORIAM

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

WILFRED OWEN

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

BEAUMONT-HAMEL

Captured, November 16th, 1916

ALAN MACKINTOSH

Dead men at Beaumont
In the mud and rain,
You that were so warm once,
Flesh and blood and brain,
You've made an end of dying,
Hurts and cold and crying,
And all but quiet lying
Easeful after pain.

Dead men at Beaumont,
Do you dream at all
When the leaves of summer
Ripen to their fall?

Will you walk the heather,
Feel the Northern weather,
Wind and sun together,
Hear the grouse-cock call?

Maybe in the night-time
A shepherd boy will see
Dead men, and ghastly,
Kilted to the knee,
Fresh from new blood-shedding,
With airy footsteps treading
Hill and field and steading,
Where they used to be.

Nay, not so I see you,
Dead friends of mine;
But like a dying pibroch
From the battle-line
I hear your laughter ringing,
And the sweet songs you're singing,
And the keen words winging
Across the smoke and wine.

So we still shall see you,
Be it peace or war,
Still in all adventuring
You shall go before
And our children dreaming
Shall see your bayonets gleaming,
Scotland's warriors streaming
Forward evermore.

AFTER LOOS

PATRICK MACGILL

Café Pierre le Blanc, Nouex les Mines, Michaelmas Eve, 1915

Was it only yesterday
Lusty comrades marched away?
Now they're covered up with clay.

Seven glasses used to be
Called for six good mates and me—
Now we only call for three.

Little crosses neat and white,
Looking lonely every night,
Tell of comrades killed in fight.

Hearty fellows they have been,
And no more will they be seen
Drinking wine in Nouex les Mines.

Lithe and supple lads were they,
Marching merrily away—
Was it only yesterday?

TO THE MEMORY OF WILFRED OWEN

CHARLES NORMAN

Into the sunset of their youth they strode,
  Resolved to horror splendidly, and brave;
Oh, brave they were upon war's final road
  To bring irresolution to the grave,
Firmly, in the staccato scene of war
  Where the huge guns abode whose speech has blown
To twilight beaches of the evening star
  Since Flanders and the fields of France were sown
With youth, and the sad world forgot to weep.
  Oh, these were lads with singing in their blood,
And lips too fond of kissing love to sleep,
  And loathing their last mistress of moist mud.

These, in the world's far cities, walked so proud,
  Tingling when twilight glimmered, and their eyes
Saw glad-faced girls unto whose eyes they vowed
  The fleet, immortal moments of the wise.
Oh, these were lovers and beloved of many,
  The nights glowed with their ardor, days dawned bright;
Now where they sleep, they are unknown to any;
  The trailing seeds thrust through them toward the light.
And these were song-makers and full of dreaming,
  Who brooded in late hours of endeavor,
Until they saw war's lurid flowers streaming
  In the shocked sky, and shut their eyes forever.

Now, in the streets they trod, the shadows lie
In deep, spilled heaps of gloom that cats disturb
Probing the midnight and the fleece of sky
That glitters in the pool beside the curb.
And not their sons walk here, but tired, old men;
And women old for sorrow of those years
That tried their souls, and will not try again,
Having but once inured their souls to tears,
Horror and loneliness, and perished dreams.
Oh, here, before bright bugles called to death,
Lads paused for kissing the entangled gleams
Of moonlight in girls' hair; their souls drew breath.

But not for long; for then the summons came,
The glamorous treachery of bugles blowing,
And banners beating in their hearts like flame
That were not on the roads when they were going
In solemn march abreast to stain the ground,
And spill their years for petals' sustenance;
This was the final glory that they found,
In dark or twilight on the soil of France.
And lads fell there that will not ever know
Those seeds they brooded on had come to bud
On barren ground and ground beneath the snow
In the astounding blossom of their blood.

Their hearts, the harps of sorrow, are unwrought,
Are stilled forever, and will sound no more;
And all their visioning has come to nought;
Their ships of dreaming foundered by the shore.
Their songs and stories and their sculpturing,
Painting, and all the arts of their distress,
Blow with the wind from seas of evening,
Beyond the sea-towns of forgetfulness.
And we forget the grandeur of their ways
Before spring labored in the earth to speed
The tragic flowers of these empty days
That bloom upon the highway of new greed.

O slender shadows of the cross that hide
The little grass upon lads' graves, but not
The folly of our elders in their pride
Whose souls are crucified on gleams of thought:
What of the living lads—oh, what of these,
Who face the sunrise of exulting times,

Aware of the bright buds of ecstasies,
  Splendor of art, and love that chants in rhymes?
There is no voice that answers, but the moan
  Of winds mourning in twilight, and the sound
Of those manoeuvered guns again that shone
  When lads before them paced to pave the ground.

MEMORY

A. Newberry Choyce

I know a lone spot on the Arras road
  Where I shall hardly bear to walk again
For fear of waking those great souls I loved
  Who struggled to a death of piteous pain.

Ah! I should hear their laughter on the way,
  And round my heart their boyish sighs would creep;
Till I must long to leave the rushing world
  And steal away to join them in their sleep.

For only they who tread the tortured path
  Of those torn roads where swaying poplars sigh,
Can dream how God could give no greater bliss
  Than this hushed peace beneath the sad French sky.

I know a lone spot on the Arras road
  That murmurs with the moan of Memory's pain.
And I should grieve my heart with stifled sobs
  If I could bear to walk that road again.

THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE BUT THEY ALWAYS FELL

Shaemas O'Sheel

They went forth to battle but they always fell;
  Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
Nobly they fought and bravely but not well,
And sank, heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
  They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
  They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;
And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
Pierced a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.
Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle but they always fell:
Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears;
Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

SING, YE TRENCHES!

HELEN COALE CREW

Sing, ye trenches bloody-lipped!
Sing! For into you has slipped
Lycidas, dead ere his prime.
All ye cruel trenches, sing!
Under frost and under rime
All his body beautiful,
All his body wonderful,
Low hath lain. Now, cunningly,
April, with sweet mystery,
Molds the trenches horror-lipped
Into chalices of spring.

Who would not sing for Lycidas?
See, across the hideous gashes
Soft green fire of April flashes,
Starred with windflowers delicate;
Gemmed with purple violet;
Roseate with crimson glow
Where again his pulses blow
In young clover. For his sake
See the budding crocus break
Into flame; and hear the grass,
Green-tongued, sing for Lycidas!

Sing, ye gaping wounds of earth!
Tomb-like, ye have taken him,
Cradled him, distillèd him;
Womb-like, ye have brought to birth
Myriad flowers and fragrances.
Requiemed with spring he lies.
God, who took unto His heart
All his throbbing, vital part,
Sowed his body in the earth.
Let the trumpets of the grass
Paean shout for Lycidas!

LOCHABER NO MORE

NEIL MUNRO

Farewell to Lochaber, farewell to the glen,
No more will he wander Lochaber again.
Lochaber no more! Lochaber no more!
The lad will return to Lochaber no more!
The trout will come back from the deeps of the sea,
The bird from the wilderness back to the tree,
Flowers to the mountain and tides to the shore,
But he will return to Lochaber no more!

Oh, why should the hills last, that never were young,
Unperishing stars in the heavens be hung;
Be constant the seasons, undrying the stream,
And he that was gallant be gone like a dream?
Brave songs will be singing in Isles of the West,
But he will be silent who sang them the best;
The dance will be waiting, the pipes will implore,
But he will return to Lochaber no more!

Child of the forest, profound is thy sleep.
The valley that loved thee awakes but to weep;
When our fires are rekindled at dawn of the morn,
Our griefs burn afresh and our prayers are forlorn;
The night falls disconsolate, bringing no peace,
No hope for our dreams, for our sighs no release;
In vain come the true hearts and look from the door,
For thou wilt return to Lochaber no more!

OTTERBURN

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

The lad who went to Flanders—
Otterburn, Otterburn—
The lad who went to Flanders
And never will return,—

Though low he lies in Flanders,
Beneath the Flemish mud,
He hears through all his dreaming
The Otterburn in flood.

And though there be in Flanders
No clear and singing streams,
The Otterburn runs singing
Of summer through his dreams.

And when peace comes to Flanders,
Because it comes too late,
He'll still lie there, and listen
To the Otterburn in spate—

The lad who went to Flanders—
Otterburn, Otterburn—
The lad who went to Flanders,
And never will return.

ROUGE BOUQUET

JOYCE KILMER

In a wood they call the Rouge Bouquet
There is a new-made grave to-day,
Built by never a spade nor pick
Yet covered with earth ten metres thick.
There lie many fighting men,
  Dead in their youthful prime,
Never to laugh nor love again
  Nor taste the Summertime.
For Death came flying through the air.
And stopped his flight at the dugout stair,
Touched his prey and left them there,
  Clay to clay.

He hid their bodies stealthily
In the soil of the land they fought to free
  And fled away.
Now over the grave abrupt and clear
  Three volleys ring;
And perhaps their brave young spirits hear
  The bugle sing:
"Go to sleep!
Go to sleep!
Slumber well where the shell screamed and fell.
Let your rifles rest on the muddy floor,
You will not need them any more.
Danger's past;
Now at last,
Go to sleep!"

There is on earth no worthier grave
To hold the bodies of the brave
Than this place of pain and pride
Where they nobly fought and nobly died.
Never fear but in the skies
  Saints and angels stand
Smiling with their holy eyes
  On this new-come band.
St. Michael's sword darts through the air
And touches the aureole on his hair
As he sees them stand saluting there,
  His stalwart sons;
And Patrick, Brigid, Columkill
Rejoice that in veins of warriors still
  The Gael's blood runs.
And up to Heaven's doorway floats,
  From the wood called Rouge Bouquet,
A delicate cloud of buglenotes
  That softly say:
"Farewell!
Farewell!
Comrades true, born anew, peace to you!
Your souls shall be where the heroes are
And your memory shine like the morning-star.

  Brave and dear,
  Shield us here.
  Farewell!"

BY THE WOOD

ROBERT NICHOLS

How still the day is, and the air how bright!
A thrush sings and is silent in the wood;
The hillside sleeps dizzy with heat and light;
A rhythmic murmur fills the quietude;
A woodpecker prolongs his leisured flight,
Rising and falling on the solitude.

But there are those who far from yon wood lie,
Buried within the trench where all were found.
A weight of mould oppresses every eye,
Within that cabin close their limbs are bound,
And there they rot amid the long profound,
Disastrous silence of grey earth and sky.

These once, too, rested where now rests but one,
Who scarce can lift his panged and heavy head,
Who drinks in grief the hot light of the sun,
Whose eyes watch dully the green branches spread,
Who feels his currents ever slowlier run,
Whose lips repeat a silent . . . "Dead! all dead!"

O youth to come shall drink air warm and bright,
Shall hear the bird cry in the sunny wood,
All my Young England fell to-day in fight:
That bird, that wood, was ransomed by our blood!

I pray you when the drum rolls let your mood
Be worthy of our deaths and your delight.

NAMELESS MEN

EDWARD SHILLITO

Around me when I wake or sleep,
Men strange to me their vigils keep;
And some were boys but yesterday
Upon the village green at play.
Their faces I shall never know;
Like sentinels they come and go.
In grateful love I bend the knee
For nameless men who die for me.

There is in earth or heaven no room
Where I may flee this dreadful doom.
Forever it is understood
I am a man redeemed by blood.
I must walk softly all my days
Down my redeemed and solemn ways.
Christ, take the men I bring to Thee,
The men who watch and die for me.

THE DEBT UNPAYABLE

F. W. Bourdillon

What have I given,
  Bold sailor on the sea,
In earth or heaven
  That you should die for me?

What can I give
  O soldier, leal and brave,
Long as I live
  To pay the life you gave?

What tithe or part
  Can I return to thee,
O stricken heart,
  That thou should'st break for me?

The wind of Death
  For you has slain life's flowers,
It withereth
  (God grant!) all weeds in ours.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

Mulford Doughty

Song of a fair May morning,
  When the sky is bluer than blue
And the white clouds floating across it
  Seem almost too white to be true,
When the air is sweet with clover,
  And hums with the busy bee,

And across the gray salt marshes,
The guns thunder out to the sea,
And the dead lie in rows,
With their face to the foes,
Only a mile from me.

THE BELFRY OF MONS

WILFRED THORLEY

At Mons there is a belfry tall
That chimes from noon to noon;
At every quarter of the hour
It scatters forth a lovely shower
Of little notes that from the tower
All flutter down in tune.

At Mons from out the Market Place
The streets rise up the hill
Where ring the chimes that year by year
Cry out, "Look upward, lads, and cheer!
For God's own Kingdom now and here,
And peace and right good-will."

At Mons there lie a mort o' lads
A-row and underground,
That shall not hear the belfry ring
Nor human voice nor anything,
Until at the last summoning
They hear the trumpet sound.

IN FRANCE

CLINTON SCOLLARD

"Is it well with Henri and Jean and Paul?"
An old bent man to a mother said,
As they met at morn by a little stall
Where the baker sold them their loaves of bread.

"Is it well with Henri and Jean and Paul?"
And the mother bowed as beneath a rod;
Then she answered, "Aye, it is well with them all,
Well with them all—they are all with God!"

STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

I met an old man at Stow-on-the-Wold,
Who shook and shivered as though with cold.

And he said to me: "Six sons I had,
And each was a tall and a lively lad.

"But all of them went to France with the guns,
They went together, my six tall sons.

"Six sons I had, six sons I had—
And each was a tall and a lively lad."

IN MEMORIAM

Private David Sutherland killed in action in the German trench, May 16, 1916, and the others who died.

ALAN MACKINTOSH

So you were David's father,
And he was your only son,
And the new-cut peats are rotting
And the work is left undone,
Because of an old man weeping,
Just an old man in pain,
For David, his son David,
That will not come again.

Oh, the letters he wrote you,
And I can see them still,
Not a word of the fighting
But just the sheep on the hill
And how you should get the crops in
Ere the year got stormier,—
And the Boche have got his body,
And I was his officer.

You were only David's father,
But I had fifty sons
When we went up in the evening
Under the arch of the guns,

And we came back at twilight—
O God! I hear them call
To me for help and pity,
That could not help at all.

Oh, never will I forget you,
My men that trusted me!
More my sons than your fathers',
For they could only see
The little helpless babies
And the young men in their pride.
They could not see you dying,
And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,
They saw their first-born go,
But not the strong limbs broken
And the beautiful men brought low,
The piteous writhing bodies,
The screamed, "Don't leave me, Sir,"
For they were only your fathers
But I was your officer.

MOURN NOT THE DEAD

Ralph Chaplin

Mourn not the dead that in the cool earth lie—
Dust unto dust—
The calm sweet earth that mothers all who die
As all men must;

Mourn not your captured comrades who must dwell—
Too strong to strive—
Each in his steel-bound coffin of a cell, buried alive;

But rather mourn the apathetic throng—
The cowed and meek—
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong
And dare not speak!

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

JOHN MCCREA

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

THE POPPY FIELDS OF SERGEY

KATE SLAUGHTER MCKINNEY

Oh! the poppy fields of Sergey
Are the reddest red that grows;
They have dipped their cups of crimson
In the bravest blood that flows.

Hearts unstaunched gave blood, and gladly,
Hearts on hearts, gave blow on blow
For a cause—why tell the reason—
All the bleeding poppies know!

Here the moon in lamentation,
With the years will come and go,
Making gold the graves in Sergey
Where the blood-red poppies grow.

A DEAD AIRMAN

MORAY DALTON

May's tapestry of green and gold
Was hung about us fold on fold,
  Where, in the copse, the cuckoo calls,
A scented arras on the walls
  Of space and time, that held us close
As bees are garnered by the rose,
And we two, walking in that wood,
  Had half forgot the mire and blood,

(Forgive us, you who sleep in France!)
  We half forgot, and then some chance
Or some stern angel led the way
  Through quiet fields to where he lay
Broken, beneath his broken wings,
Dead, who had known but twenty Springs,
Still, where a million pulses beat,
Face downwards in the young green wheat.

That wreckage, gaunt and angular,
Had flashed above us like a star
  An hour before. Its course was done;
Finished; and one more woman's son
Had cast the cloak so dearly bought,
With patience and in travail wrought
For nine long months, worn twenty years,
How gaily! Now Fate's shears
  Had rent it, and the naked soul
Slipped out at once.
                To see life whole
One needs good eyes, but only God
Can so view death.

THE ONGOING[1]

MARY SIEGRIST

He will not come, the gallant flying boy,
Back to his field. Somewhere he wings his way
Where the Immortals keep; where Homer now
Has back his sight, David his little lad;

[1] In honor of Quentin Roosevelt, aviator, killed in the World War.

Where all those are we dully call the dead,
Who have gone greatly on some shining quest,
He takes his way. That which he quested for,
That larger freedom of a larger birth,
Captains him, flying into fields of dawn.

He has gone on where now the soldier-slain
Arise in light. Somewhere he takes his place
And leads his comrades in untrodden fields.
For never can these rest until our earth
Has ceased from travail—never can these take
Their fill of sleep until the Scourge is slain.
And so they keep them sometimes near old ways
In the accustomed fields—now flying low,
Invisible, they cheer the gallant host,
Bidding them be, as they, invincible.

Still he leads on, the gallant flying boy:
Among the "great good" dead he steers his course.

. . . . . .

Always the vision of his faring on
To unpathed fields where his great comrades wait.

ON THE WESTERN FRONT

ALFRED NOYES

I found a dreadful acre of the dead,
Marked with the only sign on earth that saves.
The wings of death were hurrying overhead,
The loose earth shook on those unquiet graves;

For the deep gun-pits, with quick stabs of flame,
Made their own thunders of the sunlit air;
Yet, as I read the crosses, name by name,
Rank after rank, it seemed that peace was there;

Sunlight and peace, a peace too deep for thought,
The peace of tides that underlie our strife,
The peace with which the moving heavens are fraught,
The peace that is our everlasting life.

The loose earth shook. The very hills were stirred.
The silence of the dead was all I heard.

II

We, who lie here, have nothing more to pray.
To all your praises we are deaf and blind.
We may not ever know if you betray
Our hope, to make earth better for mankind.

Only our silence, in the night, shall grow
More silent, as the stars grow in the sky;
And, while you deck our graves, you shall not know
How many scornful legions pass you by.

For we have heard you say (when we were living)
That some small dream of good would "cost too much,"
But when the foe struck, we have watched you giving,
And seen you move the mountains with one touch.

What can be done, we know. But, have no fear!
If you fail now, we shall not see or hear.

THE DEAD COMRADE

EDWARD CARPENTER

There among the woods, after the battle returning,
In a little open spot—how well I remember it—
Where the ground was red with the blood of my lover, my dead comrade,
(Him whom to save I would have died so gladly, O so gladly,
Whom I could not at this, at any time, bear to see suffer even a little hurt
So tenderly we loved, so tenderly.)
There on the stained, red ground, in the midst of the clotted precious blood, not even yet dry, stood a small yellow flower—
The little Cow-wheat they call it, with its slender yellow blossoms in pairs, and its faint-tinged lips.

And now in the woods each year—in the silent beautiful woods, so calm, so sweet—though the same flowers spring by the hundreds—
Not a word do they utter of that awful scene, not a word of all that carnage,
Of the splintered trees, the blood-smeared corpses, the devilish noises and the sights and smells,
Or of the livid face and faint-blue lips of him I loved as never another I could love.

O how can you grow so careless, little flowers, and yet continue
ages to grow under the trees the same—
And all the light gone out of the world for me?
Each year when summer comes and July suns,
To the woods I must go like one drawn by a fatal dread and
fascination,
To see the sight I most abhor to see—
The patch of blood, and the unharmed flower in the midst,
And faint in death the lips I love so well.

FULFILLMENT

Robert Nichols

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once? Grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children we are brethren: one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs! Pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand, shrunk, clammed and stony!
O sudden spasm, release of the dead!

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once? Grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all my joy, my grief, my love, are thine.

THE MENIN GATE [1]

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Who will remember, passing through this Gate,
The unheroic Dead who fed the guns?
Who shall absolve the foulness of their fate—
Those doomed, conscripted, invictorious ones?

Crudely renewed, the Salient holds its own,
Paid are its dim defenders by this pomp;
Paid, with a pile of peace-complacent stone,
The armies who endured that sullen swamp.

Here was the world's worst wound. And here with pride,
"Their name liveth for ever," the Gateway claims.
Was ever an immolation so belied
As these intolerably nameless names?
Well might the Dead who struggled in the slime
Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime.

A SOLDIER LISTENS

To S. S.

JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

What was it came to distress you?
Who from the restless dead?
As you sat in the slanting shadows
With a heavy head.

The music pressed in among us,
Almost too much—
You quivered and seemed to be startled
By a known touch.

Even when healing cadences
Reached out to you,
Your face looked broken in pieces,
Shot through and through.

As you sat in the slanting shadows
With a heavy head,
What was it came to distress you?
Who from the clamoring dead?

[1] The Menin Gate is a British War Memorial.

TO EDWARD THOMAS

ROBERT FROST

I slumbered with your poems on my breast
Spread open as I dropped them half-read through
Like dove-wings on a figure on a tomb
To see, if in a dream they brought of you,

I might not have the chance I missed in life
Through some delay, and call you to your face
First soldier, and then poet, and then both,
Who died a soldier-poet of your race.

I meant, you meant, that nothing should remain
Unsaid between us, brother, and this remained—
And one thing more that was not then to say:
The victory for what it lost and gained.

You went to meet the shell's embrace of fire
On Vimy Ridge; and when you fell that day
The war seemed over more for you than me,
But now for me than you—the other way.

How over, though, for even me who knew
The foe thrust back unsafe beyond the Rhine,
If I was not to speak of it to you
And see you pleased once more with words of mine?

SUNSET

T. W. H. CROSLAND

Sickle moon and smouldering star
Beauty burning in the west,
Where is he that I loved best?

Beauty burning in the west,
Lo, an iron ache called War
Gathers him to her stark breast.

Sickle moon and smouldering star—
All the soul hath she possessed
Of the love that I loved best.

Like a King he takes his rest,
Past all loves and dreams that are—
Sickle moon and smouldering star,
Beauty burning in the west.

NOT DEAD

ROBERT GRAVES

Walking through trees to cool my heat and pain,
I know that David's with me here again.
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.
Caressingly I stroke
Rough bark of the friendly oak.
A brook goes babbling by; the voice is his.
Turf burns with pleasant smoke;
I laugh at chaffinch and at primroses.
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.
Over the whole wood in a little while
Breaks his slow smile.

REQUIEM FOR A DEAD WARRIOR

EDGAR MCINNIS [1]

Sleep on, brave heart, thy broken sword beside thee!
The last red breach is stormed, the last foe slain
There is no strife nor sacrifice denied thee,
No trumpets call to fierce assault again.
Now with our bright blades sheathed
And colors laurel-wreathed
We come, thy comrades in the trampling fight,
And bear thee with a long, proud song
To the deep house of night.

II

Sleep on, brave heart! Our cause is ours no longer.
The world we saved rolls on without our aid.
We fought for right, but hate and fear are stronger;
We dreamed of peace and, dreams have been betrayed.

[1] A young Canadian poet who won the Newdigate prize at Oxford after being given the Jardine prize at the University of Toronto.

But never troubled breath
Can touch thee, who in death
Hast seen the flaming triumph of our wars,
Nor heartbreak find thy deep, sweet sleep
Beneath the quiet stars.

III

Sleep on! Sleep on! The winds of shame and sorrow
Blow mute above thy buried memory.
Thou wilt not wake to the inglorious morrow
That mocks our anguish and our victory.
Thy daring and thy pain,
Thy youth for visions slain,
Were crowned with honor in the crimson dawn,
And Death was to the end thy friend—
O valiant heart, sleep on!

THE JOURNEY

GRACE FALLOW NORTON

I went upon a journey
To countries far away,
From province unto province
To pass my holiday.

And when I came to Serbia,
In a quiet little town
At an inn with a flower-filled garden
With a soldier I sat down.

Now he lies dead at Belgrade.
You heard the cannon roar!
It boomed from Rome to Stockholm,
It pealed to the far west shore.

And when I came to Russia,
A man with flowing hair
Called me his friend and showed me
A flowing river there.

Now he lies dead at Lemberg,
Beside another stream,

In his dark eyes extinguished
The friendship of his dream.

And then I crossed two countries
Whose names on my lips are sealed . . .
Not yet had they flung their challenge
Nor led upon the field.

Sons who lie dead at Liege,
Dead by the Russian lance,
Dead in southern mountains,
Dead through the farms of France.

I stopped in the land of Louvain,
So tranquil, happy, then.
I lived with a good old woman,
With her sons and her grandchildren.

Now they lie dead at Louvain,
Those simple kindly folk.
Some heard, some fled. It must be
Some slept, for they never woke.

I came to France. I was thirsty.
I sat me down to dine.
The host and the young wife served me
With bread and fruit and wine.

Now he lies dead at Cambrai—
He was sent among the first.
In dreams she sees him dying
Of wounds, of heat, or thirst.

At last I passed to Dover
And saw upon the shore
A tall young English captain
And soldiers, many more.

Now they lie dead at Dixmude,
The brave, the strong, the young!
I turn unto my homeland,
All my journey sung!

THE UNEMPLOYED

KATHARINE TYNAN

The dead men to the living call:
Brothers of old, how goes the day?
Is there ripe fruit on the Southern wall
Rich with our blood that rots in clay?

Brothers of the great brotherhood
Do they fling roses for your feet?
The living heard them where they stood
Idle, or trudged the pitiless street.

Hopeless, unwanted. Brothers of old
How go the song, the dance, the mirth?
So you are warm, we are not cold
Lapped in impenetrable earth.

The victors stand in the market-place
And no man gives them wine or bread:
Would that we too had won that race
And earned the clay-cold rest! they said.

But to be dead, to lie alone!
They answered: it is well: go sleep,
Never to know what we have known:
With dreams to keep: with dreams to keep.

TOMBE DES ANGLAIS

HAGAR PAUL

Sleep, in this forest plot,
Unknown for ever.
Though France forgetteth not
Your last endeavour,
Your own shall find the spot
Never, ah, never!

Sun on the forest wide,
But not for your seeing,
Nor how down each green ride
Red deer go fleeing.
Bright youth, a martyr, died,
France, in thy freeing.

Boyhood's scarce conscious breath
Cheerfully given—
None to record each death,
How each had striven—
Greater love no man hath
This side of Heaven.

SOLDIER-DEAD

GILBERT EMERY

O Beautiful Young Dead!

. . . . . .

Still, still I see them pass,
So gallant and so young, so gay,
Down their bright, terrible and unpremeditated way.
Still, still I see them pass,
Laughter and lightness on their lips—
Each lad a battle-flag that breaks and dips
In morning wind
Full with the Spring and sun and sea and upper hills.
Good lads, clean, strong and straight;
For soon or late
I think Lord Christ forgave them all the sins they'd sinned.
Still, still they pass;
Their beat of marching feet along the street still thrills
In the heart-breaking music. . . .

. . . . . .

Now rest they, well beyond life's need.
Nor lonely eyes;
Nor any voice; nor stars; nor deeps nor hills
Shall call and they give heed.
The homely light that fills
An evening window; children with happy hands;
Dear women soft and warm
To hold and shelter from the night and storm;
All the familiar dream which lies
Within familiar ken of the bright lands
Of youth—denied.
Lord Christ, be merciful to those that died!

. . . . . .

Still breaks the Spring
And still the orchards bloom;
The twilight valleys flow again
With tranquil tides of blue;
Belovèd birds up-wing
Shrill singing. . . .
  Nights are sweet with rain
And the wet fragrance of sown fields;
Lilacs and sunny morning at the open door. . . .
And Love. . . .
  So the strong loom
Of earth weaves mercifully and new,
And men beget what death shall claim once more.

. . . . . .

O Beautiful Young Dead!

THE DEAD

RUPERT BROOKE

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
  There's none of these so lonely and poor of old
  But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
  Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
  That men call age; and those who would have been
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
  Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
    And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
  And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
    And we have come into our heritage.

THE SOLDIER

RUPERT BROOKE

If I should die, think only this of me:
  That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
  In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by her rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds: dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

RESURRECTION

Hermann Hagedorn

Not long did we lie on the torn, red field of pain.
We fell, we lay, we slumbered, we took rest,
With the wild nerves quiet at last, and the vexed brain
Cleared of the winged nightmares, and the breast
Freed of the heavy dreams of hearts afar.
We rose at last under the morning star.
We rose, and greeted our brothers, and welcomed our foes.
We rose; like the wheat when the wind is over, we rose.
With shouts we rose, with gasps and incredulous cries,
With bursts of singing, and silence, and awestruck eyes,
With broken laughter, half tears, we rose from the sod,
With welling tears and with glad lips, whispering, "God."
Like babes, refreshed from sleep, like children, we rose,
Brimming, with deep content, from our dreamless repose.
And "What do you call it?" asked one. "I thought I was dead."
"You are," cried another. "We're all of us dead and flat."
"I'm alive as a cricket. There's something wrong with your head."
They stretched their limbs and argued it out where they sat.

And over the wide field friend and foe
Spoke of small things, remembering not old woe
Of war and hunger, hatred and fierce words.
They sat and listened to the brooks and birds,
And watched the starlight perish in pale flame,
Wondering what God would look like when He came.

SPORTSMEN IN PARADISE

T. P. Cameron Wilson [1]

They left the fury of the fight,
  And they were very tired.
The gates of Heaven were open quite,
  Unguarded and unwired.
There was no sound of any gun,
  The land was still and green:
Wide hills lay silent in the sun,
  Blue valleys slept between.

They saw far-off a little wood
  Stand up against the sky.
Knee-deep in grass a great tree stood;
  Some lazy cows went by. . . .
There were some rooks sailed overhead,
  And once a church-bell pealed.
"God! but it's England," someone said,
  "And there's a cricket-field!"

GREATER LOVE

Wilfred Owen

Red lips are not so red
  As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.
Kindness of wooed and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure.
O Love, your eyes lose lure
  When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude
  Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,
Rolling and rolling there
Where God seems not to care;
Till the fierce Love they bear
  Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

[1] A British captain, killed in action.

Your voice sings not so soft,—
  Though even as wind murmuring through raftered loft,—
Your dear voice is not dear,
Gentle and evening clear,
As theirs whom none now hear
  Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot,
  Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot;
And though your hand be pale,
Paler are all which trail
Your cross through flame and hail:
  Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.

THE PACT

ALFRED NOYES

They have no pact to sign—our peaceful dead.
  Pacts are for trembling hands and heads grown gray.
Ten million graves record what youth has said,
  And cannot now unsay.

They have no pact to sign—our quiet dead
  Whose eyes in that eternal peace are drowned.
Age doubts and wakes, and asks if night be fled;
  But youth sleeps sound.

They have no pact to sign—our faithful dead.
  Theirs is a deeper pledge, unseen, unheard,
Sealed in the dark, unwritten, sealed with red;
  And they will keep *their* word.

They have no pact to sign—our happy dead.
  But if, O God, if WE should sign in vain,
With dreadful eyes, out of each narrow bed,
  Our dead will rise again.

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